

# **REMEMBERING THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS: THE SECRET LIFE OF MEMORIALS**



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Title page photograph of Mackay Cane Cutters Memorial, and all other photographs not otherwise attributed, were taken by the author.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The 19th century transportation of over 60 000 indigenous South Sea Islanders to labour on colonial Queensland sugar-cane fields is an episode of Australia's history with contested historiography, and current social, cultural and political repercussions. Australian South Sea Islanders (ASSI) today are a minority group who have had little recourse for representation on either material or textual records, still struggling with issues of representation and status in Australia today. The situation for ASSI archaeology is characterised by the distinct paucity of discernible ASSI material culture and memory of their part in the Australian story remains in the liminal, threshold territory of their indentured ancestors.

However, physical manifestations of the ASSI story in the form of eruptions of communal memory in public spaces have arisen over the intervening years, at various points on the Queensland landscape: memorials, spaces where history and memory intersect. It is argued that these memory places, rather than static artefactual stand-ins for the past, are dynamic material culture which have particular agency and relevance in the present, offering to archaeological inquiry, temporal, spatial, material, and cultural heritage data regarding the on-going post-colonial process.

Added to the quantifiable outcomes of the study of these memory places is the conceptual consideration of memorials as holding inherently the intangible quality of the 'memory' of a past person, place or event significant

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to a local or extended community. Memorials can be understood to be public memory 'materialised', thus providing entry points for the archaeological interpretation of cultural heritage which otherwise has no physical presence.

This research, while a material culture study focused on the materialised expression of memory, also allows discussion beyond typologies, styles and categories to consider the relational meaning and distributed agency of these objects within the complex network of public memory. In addition to considerations of their symbolic, mnemonic or representational reflections of the past, it is argued that contemporary memorials are extensions of the original ASSI event to which they refer, a part of a continuous process that is helping to shape current communities. In this way, as components of the unfolding ASSI event trajectory, the continuing story of ASSI-related memorials, which includes our academic attention, offers a cultural heritage platform from which future archaeology may derive, supporting minority representation in the national narrative.

This thesis contends that by considering heritage remembrance structures that are connected with the original ASSI event as strategies to link the present day to an invisible past, we support current communities to comprehend their own cultural heritage, thus promoting a more encompassing and unified populace. This research may then be considered a precursor to a future activist archaeology which involves working more directly in collaboration with ASSI descendants and other local communities



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to connect the many other facets of ASSI history culture. In this way, applying archaeological thinking to the contemporary past can indeed have a direct bearing on present and future cultural heritage knowledge.

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## **DECLARATION**

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Julie Kaye Mitchell

March 2017

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On a personal level, my heartfelt gratitude goes to my wonderfully supportive family whose lives have been affected by my absence for the last five years. My amazing sons Jarrad and Travis who were forced to cope with their own university degrees without a mother or a family home when I disappeared interstate for the duration. As well as my loving parents who never question my life choices, even when facing their own twilight years struggles and remain a font of moral support by telephone, along with my siblings Paula, David and families who stepped up to fill the gap.

Many individuals aided this research in various roles of government, private, university departments and volunteer staff along the way. However one person in particular managed the entire thesis journey with me, acting in every support role possible, from research assistant to picker up of pieces,

---

brow mopper to assistant site recorder. To my amazing partner Ian Hendy-Pooley goes my undying love and appreciation. Thank you for your IT expertise, uncomplaining support and companionship.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of the Australian South Sea Islanders, past, present and future, who deserve acknowledgement here and in the National Narrative.

# REMEMBERING AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS

## CHAPTER 1: Thesis Introduction

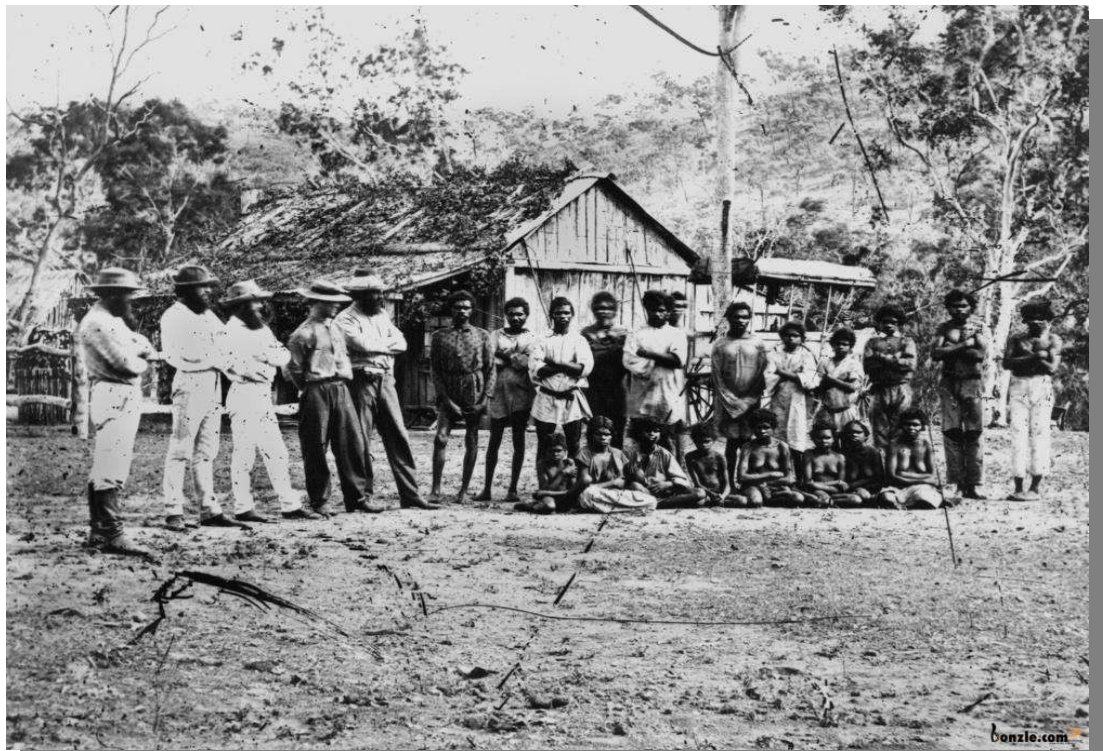


**Figure 1.1: The Western South Pacific Ocean in relation to Australia**  
([www.geographicguide.com](http://www.geographicguide.com))

### 1.1 Introduction - Thesis Overview

The use of a Pacific Islands Indentured labour workforce in colonial Australia is an episode of the country's history with contested historiography, current social, cultural and political repercussions, and residual cultural heritage and identity issues for the descendant community (Banivanua-Mar 2007; Bolitho 2014; Connell 2010; Flanagan et al 2011; Hockley 2011; Quanchi 1998). The 19th century transportation of over 60 000 indigenous South Sea Islanders is

unique in Australian history and has impacted physical and social landscapes (Hayes 2002, Ingram 2013; Irvine 2004; Mercer 1995; Moore 2009). However, recruitment histories and the group's tangled colonial history, subaltern status and marginalisation have resulted in a lack of material culture to connect them to their Australian heritage, posing challenges for archaeological investigation (Barker & Lamb 2011; Gistitin 1995; Hayes 2000, 2001, 2002; Mullins & Gistitin 2006; Willis Burden 2006).



**Figure 1.2: South Sea Islands Labour Group in Daintree, Queensland 1870 (State Library of Queensland, Negative No: 189100)**

Although most faced mandatory expulsion within four decades, people of South Sea Islands descent are still living in Australian communities, but memory of their part in the Australian story remains in the liminal, threshold



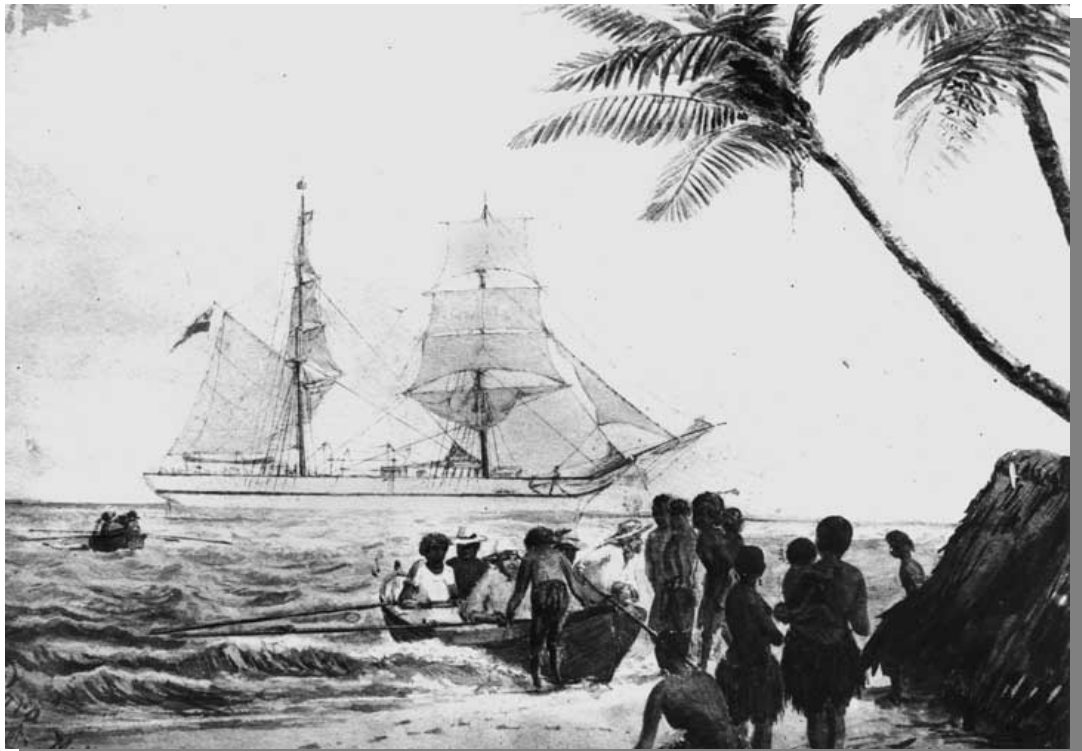
territory of their indentured ancestors (Fatnowna 2002; Maclellan 2012; Mclean 2011; Moore 1979, 2001, 2009). As historian Clive Moore articulated in a radio interview broadcast in September 2013, the present situation of the Islander community remains largely forgotten:

Australians have a lot of amnesia even about Indigenous Australians ... since they haven't been taught this in history in school. The same thing applies to South Sea Islanders. Anyone who lives along the Queensland or the northern NSW coast knows that they're still there [and] are puzzled that they're still here in Australia. They think that they've already gone (Moore in Ingram 2013:5).

From this we understand that the general Australian perception, even within local communities, is one of cognitive dissonance, as existing beliefs are challenged when it comes to the reality of a temporally extended Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) presence. Existing social memory of the ASSI indentured labour event, despite the volume of the original 60 000 workers and 40 000 descendants (Irvine 2004:126) or the enormous impact their labour had on determining the current landscape, has simply been forgotten or overwritten in historical narratives.

Even where the descendants themselves have retained family histories (Fatnowna 2002), and despite the existence of historiographical texts (Moore 2009; Quanchi 1998; Shineberg 1999), details have not been transferred to the broader community, and memories of the ASSI are once again isolated and disconnected outside of their localities. Further compounding the

situation, the descendant community have effectively been silenced from the national narrative, forced to inhabit a liminal position on the periphery of Australian society, denied acknowledgment of cultural heritage, and separated by generations from the Pacific Islands (Flanagan et al 2011; Gabey 2013; Ingram 2013; Irvine 2004; Lake 2002; Mercer 1995). Indeed, as a cultural group the ASSI were only formally recognised by the Commonwealth Government in 1994 and by the Queensland Government in 2000. 2014 marked the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first labour transport ship.



***Figure 1.3: Recruiting ship 'Para' by Ship Captain Wawn, 1880 (State Library of Queensland, Negative No: 65320)***

Conventionally, the archaeological key to accessing and establishing an ASSI

heritage would be through the physicality of material culture. 'As an index of past action, material culture is ultimately connective, it connects people to the physical world, to temporal processes, and through its physicality directs them to future action' (Jones 2007:46). However, the situation for ASSI archaeology is characterised by the distinct paucity of ASSI discernible material culture. Although not indigenous to Australia, the ASSI labourers were brought directly from indigenous situations on various Pacific Islands (figure 1.1) and often with few material objects in their possession. Moreover, many of the relatively few Islander-specific artefacts that were brought with them have been lost from an archaeological context, due to the traditional use of organic materials, and colonial/ industrial entanglements.



**Figure 1.4: South Sea Islanders on a labour vessel (State Library of Queensland, Negative No: 16954)**

Thus, even though historical archaeology has the capacity to incorporate textual and oral histories, it struggles to offer physical evidence of cultural heritage connections. Or even to support or disprove the current history/memory conundrum of descendant oral histories that are at odds with historiographical texts which pivot on contentions regarding exact recruitment circumstances including practices of kidnap versus willing indenture agreements (Flanagan 2011; Gabey 2013:1; Irvine 2004:4; Kerr 1995:15). Indeed, both history and memory claims are themselves categorically biased, as personal memories are subjective and historical information depends to a great degree on what questions are being asked and what records or items from the past are available.

Despite these challenges, the emergence of several relevant themes in historical archaeology, including concepts of labour, entanglement, multi-vocality, memory studies and the contemporary past, has attracted some archaeological attention regarding the ASSI event (Barker & Lamb 2011; Beck 2009; Hayes 2002). The limited results tell a story of sparse extant evidence of ASSI indentured labour presence and require archaeological interpretation 'because more often than not they are part of the landscape rather than imposed upon it' (Hayes 2002:81). Terrestrial research (Hayes 2000;2001;2002) has determined that although physical aspects of the ASSI past are 'rooted in the cultural landscape ... they are not particularly obvious to the wider community' (Hayes 2002:82). In the maritime context, Beck's

research of the Queensland labour trade, which focused on the historic shipwreck of labour vessel the Foam, also noted 'the dearth of archaeological research into the Queensland labour trade' (Beck 2009:209). Most recently, Barker and Lamb excavated a stone mound which linked significantly to Melanesian indentured labourers and they too wrote of 'the near invisibility today of a distinctive SSI archaeological signature' (Barker and Lamb 2011: 69). Evidence of the ASSI event then, continues predominantly as personal descendant histories, documental references and a near invisible archaeological signature (Barker & Lamb 2011:69; Hayes 2002:78; Moore 2013:5).

However, physical manifestations of the ASSI story, in the form of eruptions of communal memory in public spaces, have arisen over the intervening years at various points on the Queensland landscape. These are memorials, sites of memory, spaces where history and memory intersect (Healy 1997:26; Besley 2005:1) and, as such, represent claims to be remembered both in the Australian historical record and the national narrative. For the purposes of this thesis, the perspective on memorials as history and memory intersections provides the ideal entry point to negotiate ASSI representation.

There are, of course, many ways of interpreting memorials, supported by the long and significant academic attention they have attracted. Lydon, for example, asserts that memorials can be considered to be 'physical traces of the past, [which] assume a prominent position ... somewhere between the

landscape and artefact, [and that] such places individualise collective memory at the same time as they express a consensual narrative history' (Lydon 2005:109).

Memory itself though, is difficult to define and can exist in many forms at a variety of scales (Casey 2004:20). A brief discussion of these follows in Chapter 1.6 Notes on Terminology. Memory is expressed tangibly through statues and monuments created to memorialise. Intangible expressions can occur via oral histories, mythology, kinaesthetically danced stories, and aurally transmitted songs and music. For memory of the ASSI, a dichotomy between tangible and intangible representation epitomises the current state of tension between oral and written versions of the labour story and reflects differing traditional styles of memory keeping.

Contrasting with the 'colonialist impulse' for the physicality of memorials (Besley 2005:38) are sand drawings that are traditional memory keeping and transmission practices in the Pacific Islands homelands of the ASSI. Inscribed in 2008 on the 'UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity', these are intricate designs traced in sand or dust to accompany spoken histories; a particularly fascinating style in its enduring yet transient quality. The stories themselves, and the accompanying designs, must be actively learned, passed down through generations, and tell involved culturally-specific histories, that stem back to creation stories. However, once the story is told—arguably 'materialised' through voice and



design, and present in physical, tangible form—the sand or dust is wiped, or blown clear again, and the story returns to the intangible state of human memory.

A children's sand drawing lesson at the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (Vanuatu Cultural Centre) in 2012 had an adult instructor who narrated, while children proudly and carefully performed accompanying drawings in an immersive and participatory process. On this particular day examples varied in content from ancient tales of belonging and culture origin, to a story of European black-birding ships, which indicates that sand drawing is a dynamic and evolving process, that adopts new events as they become part of the communal identity and heritage pool. Unlike the situation in Australia, the Vanuatuan national narrative includes the indentured labour event into social memory by dynamically sharing the (hi)story over generations.



***Figure 1.5: Vanuatuan sand drawing of labour ship  
(Author's photo 2 June 2012)***

Such social memory shifts indicate that memory is not a static and passive component of the past, but an active process quite capable of change and reinterpretation, and that a society's remembering of a more inclusive, multi-vocal past does not necessarily require the erasing of one history to make way for another. This suggests that avenues for remembering the ASSI indentured labour event within the broader collective of Australian social memory are still possible and raises questions about Australia's Western memory practices, which have resulted in 'colonial histories often centred

upon monuments and other heavy tangible statements' (Lydon 2005:112).

A focus of this thesis therefore, is to investigate socio-cultural practices of remembering and identity creation through the archaeological enquiry of ASSI representation in Australian memorials: How are the ASSI portrayed/constructed in Australian memorials? What kind of ethnicity is ascribed to them and what does this mean? What aspects of the ASSI event are represented in Australian memorials? Does this vary regionally, and, if so, why or why not?

Some memory theorists argue that what is actively being forgotten is as important as what is being remembered (Connerton 2008; Jones 2007:9). For both individual and social memories, people must forget some things in order to be able to form new ones: 'The process of collective forgetting is thus not one which is opposed to collective memory, but an important component of it' (Harrison 2013: 588). This concept places an interesting slant on the 'forgetting' of the ASSI indentured labour event in the Australian national historical narrative, when we consider 'forgetting [as] a necessary form of cultural production, a vital decision-making process by which we choose to emphasise and memorialise events that have social value, and forget those which are irrelevant' (Harrison 2013: 589). In this light, it can be argued that the forgetting of the ASSI labour event is part of a wider colonialist narrative in which industrial expansion in Australia is remembered at the expense of the labour relations that created it.

Sites of memory connected with the ASSI event, therefore, offer layers of meaning while presenting a conundrum of sorts for archaeological investigation; at once presenting a tangible, physical location and material culture, but inextricably linked with the intangible 'slippery fish', memory. Providing a physical representation somewhere between remembering and forgetting, memory sites 'reflect who and what communities choose to remember' (Besley 2005:38) and can be construed as 'crossroads, points where space and time meet memory and as such [are] crucial to belonging' (Kolstrup 1999:1).

This thesis puts forward the argument that in lieu of definitive material culture, an historical archaeological investigation of contemporary memory sites and memorials connected with the ASSI colonial labour event and consequent post-colonial situation, when viewed together as an assemblage, presents both an entry point to establishing a physical, spatial connection to the event and a contraindication of the general level of forgetfulness apparent within local social memory and the broader Australian national narrative. As with Nora's (1989:7) conceptualisation of memorials as *lieu de memoire* - sites of memory that remind people of the past, but exist in place of the real environments of historical memory or *milieux de memoire* - so too can ASSI-related memorials be addressed as contemporary memory sites, physical objects and places that have emerged to take the place of historical material connections. Further, the existing tensions between written history and oral

memory accounts can also be explored from this space when considered from the concept that memory sites 'can operate between history and memory, at the intersection rather than belong to one or other category' (Healy 1997:26).

In addition to considering ASSI-related memorials as material objects which represent or symbolise aspects of the ASSI event, this thesis argues that by viewing the memorials as an archaeological assemblage, a further material engagement focus is enabled (Alberti et al 2013:29; Latour 2005; Malafouris 2004; Van Oyen 2015). This allows consideration of the ways in which material properties contribute to the interchange between materials and humans in the world to produce meaning (Alberti et al 2013; Buchli and Lucas 2001; Malafouris and Renfrew 2010), specifically in this case, the ties between materiality and memory (Connerton 2008; Jones 2007; Malafouris 2004; Van Dyke & Alcock 2003). In this way, along with ameliorating the contemporary post-colonial problem of inequality for minority groups, some contribution towards understanding the complexities of social memory for archaeological method and theory is offered, working from a contemporary surface assemblage to recognise relationships between past and present objects and events (Harrison 2011; Martin 2013).

## **1.2 Research Aims**

Social memory of the ASSI labour event was selected as the focus for this thesis for three key reasons: it is a contemporary socio-cultural issue requiring attention, it is a gap in archaeological knowledge/attention and it provides a prime opportunity to explore the potential of archaeology to investigate aspects/relationships of materiality and memory. As an archaeological encounter, the ASSI story has themes of unequal power relations, issues of race, class, identity and representation, and offers a post-colonial perspective on ASSI history at both the local/micro and extended/macro scales.

Added to the research questions which follow, this thesis aims to provide a working example of the relevance of contemporary archaeology, reinforcing its strength as a dynamic means to access and disseminate cultural heritage information that is pertinent not only to studies of the past, but also to current and future social and political issues. 'What better reason for archaeology to exist than to meet the needs of people?' (Atalay et al. 2014:8). The focus, while designed around a contemporary situation, addresses not only 'the present itself, but also the spaces in which the past and future intervene within it... encompass[ing] not only the study of contemporary material cultures, but also the pasts and futures which they embody and evoke' (Graves-Brown et al 2013:11). In this way the research may then be considered a precursor to a future activist archaeology which involves working more directly in collaboration with ASSI descendants and other local

communities to connect the many other facets of Australian South Sea Islanders' cultural heritage.



## 1.3 Thesis Questions

As well as the practical outcome of providing a spatial connection to the historical ASSI labour event, several theoretical questions revolving around relationships of material culture and the intangible quality of memory are posed:

- PUBLIC MEMORY OF THE COLONIAL ASSI PAST

What aspects of the contested ASSI (hi)stories are represented in Australian memorials and how are they represented?

How are the ASSI portrayed / constructed in Australian memorials?

- REMEMBERING THE ASSI IN THE PRESENT

What is the relationship between ASSI-related memory sites and contemporary debates about Islander identity and cultural heritage?

To what extent does the past construct the present, or the present determine understandings of the past?

- MEMORY STRATEGIES

What do comparisons and contrasts between ASSI-related memorials tell us about the ways humans interact with materials to produce meaning?

What can this ASSI memorial research tell us about accessing human memory strategies through the material record?

- HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

What is the relevance of an archaeology of the contemporary world to issues of present day relationships and inequalities?

Do memorials create memories or hold memories?

These questions are explored through the mechanics of memory inherent in commemorative material culture, focussing on aspects of materiality, cultural heritage and memory practices represented at public memory sites. To what extent do memorials create social memory, or social memory create memorials?

## **1.4 Research Design**

The broad scope of the research questions, asking about social memory and materiality, are obviously open to broad general conclusions and may be affected by local specifics, such as issues of identity, race, class and gender, which involve more than a quantitative exploration to provide meaning. The research paradigm, therefore, requires space to support both quantitative and qualitative information. The combination of collection methods, discussed in chapter four, supports this outcome, providing a sample cross section of data within the spatial and temporal parameters, of the entire Queensland sugar area. The data derived is then able to be considered by way of individual case study or and across the entire assemblage, while at the same time providing the capacity to speak to broader research interests. In order to further understand the relationships between materiality and public memory and their roles in how people communicate meaning about past events, aspects of actor-network-theory (ANT) consider connections between the psychological concepts involved in the creation of memory sites and the physiological aspects of their material existence.

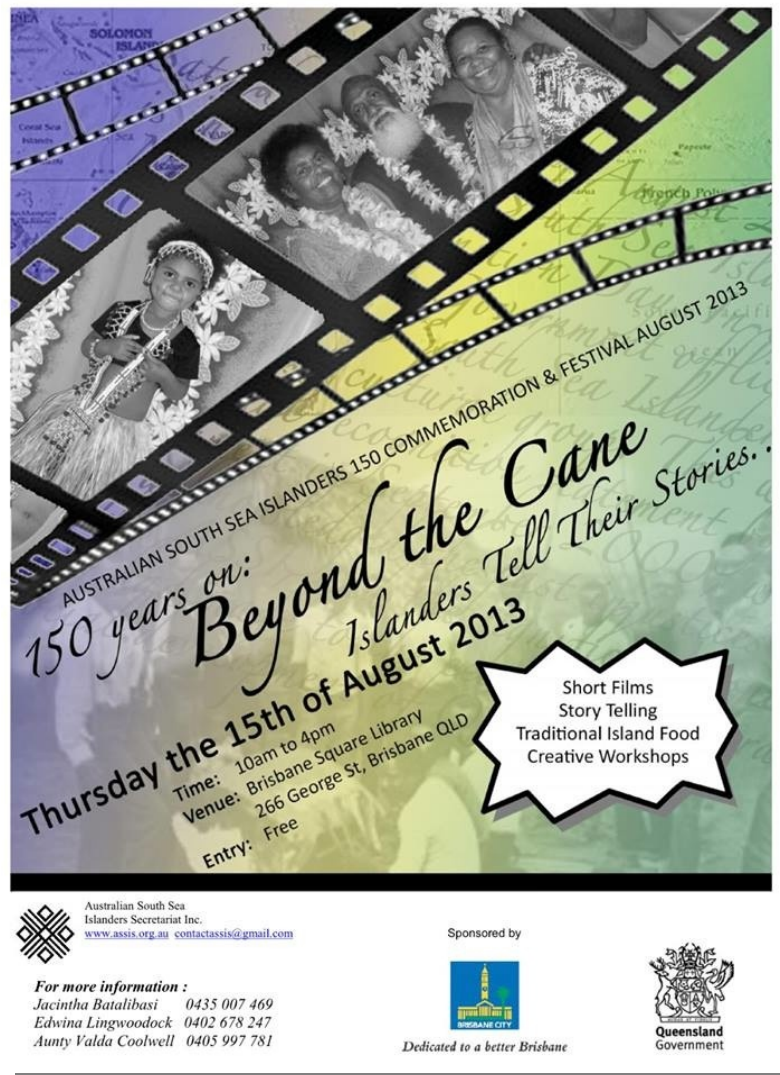
This approach facilitates a consideration of ASSI-related memory sites from multiple perspectives focused on the materialised expression of memory. Also enabled is discussion beyond typologies, styles and categories to consider the relational meaning and distributed agency of these objects within the complex network of public memory.

In this way the research design also supports the relevance of ‘an archaeology of the contemporary world’ (Graves-Brown et al 2013; Harrison 2011; Olivier 2011), which ‘encompasses not only the study of contemporary material cultures, but also the pasts and futures which they embody and evoke’ (Graves-Brown et al 2013:11). As Lydon (2009:ix) points out, ‘[a]rchaeology is often used as a metaphor for a past that is distant and divorced from the present’. Following these lines of thought, by considering heritage remembrance structures that are connected with the original ASSI event as strategies to link the present day to an invisible past, this research design applies archaeological thinking to the contemporary socio-cultural landscape. This also speaks to Harrison’s (2013) call for an archaeology ‘in and of the present’, which sees archaeology as an engagement primarily with the present, and considers traces of the past within it, rather than ‘the modernist trope of archaeology as excavation and the idea of a past which is buried and hidden’ (Harrison 2013:141). ‘[T]he archaeology of the contemporary is about surfaces and assemblages (Harrison 2011), and moreover a world that is being lived’ (Graves-Brown et al 2013:16).

This also sits well with Holtorf’s (2012:29) argument that archaeologists searching for the past will instead find their present. Holtorf argues that considering archaeological artefacts and methods as a social practice that supports a ‘history culture’ is a way of negotiating current social realities and understandings in which ‘archaeology reflects and is embedded in present-day society’ (Holtorf 2012:5). Of particular relevance to ASSI heritage due to

the varied memory keeping practices, 'history culture' is a term coined by Holtorf in the 1990s, which comprises all references in society to past times, that is, all occasions where the past is present in everyday social life.

This includes heritage sites, museum exhibitions, school lessons, tourist brochures, political speeches, historical novels, TV documentaries, some advertisements, academic lectures, narrated folktales, and guided tours to ancient monuments and other sites of memory (Holtorf 1996:119).



**Figure 1.6: History culture example – Islander Commemoration Festival 2013 ( [www.assis.org.au](http://www.assis.org.au) )**

It can be argued, therefore, that the seeking to reconcile the contentious and forgotten ASSI past through the materials-based discipline of archaeology, is itself a reflection of evolving contemporary Australian societal attitudes. Even then, as people view, interact and instigate such archaeological projects, a certain divide often exists between the role that artefacts from the past play in the lives of those engaging with them in the present. This appears as an awareness that the objects, and their (hi)stories belong to past people.

This thesis works on the premise that by working with memorials connected with the ASSI indentured labour event, we are reconciling the past with both the present and the future. By interpreting these memorial structures as enduring time travellers, existing in multiple temporal dimensions of past, present and future, we are able to see the past enduring as a part of the present. 'A monument of the past is a structure of meaning to be received and not recovered ... the meaning of a monument of the past is the future of the monument' (Ashok 2007:13 in Holtorf 2008:414). Also, by considering memorial structures in this way, as connected to the ASSI labour event, we are, in effect, providing a physical dimension to an invisible cultural heritage which has been missing, and will, by its materiality, endure into the future.

In this way, we consider the role of archaeology in current relationships and inequalities, asking whether archaeology can be a tool for change, have a wider social impact, tackle current social issues, and thus, encourage community development. This research may then be considered a precursor

to a future activist archaeology which involves working more directly in collaboration with ASSI descendants and other local communities to connect the many other facets of ASSI history culture.

## **1.5 Overview of the Structure of the Thesis**

Structurally, this thesis is organised to travel through broad temporal paradigms, proceeding from an initial review of past ASSI historical circumstances, through the theoretical considerations underlying the research data framework designed in the present, to a discussion of research outcomes and their implications for the future.

Chapter 1 (Thesis Introduction) provides the introductory overview, with brief context statements to position the thesis aims, questions, methodology, concepts, terminology and chapter structure that follows. The historical research presented in this chapter lays the foundation upon which the current situation of cultural invisibility and historical memory amnesia can be understood. This chapter defines the study area and sites, establishing the ASSI as the lens which sets the focus of the thesis on the archaeological challenges of dealing with a primary intangible aspect of the human experience, namely memory.

Chapter 2 (Research Context – Literatures) elaborates the research context, summarising the past background and current ASSI situation, and reviews and contextualises historiographical literature to locate the thesis within themes of Australian historical archaeology. From this, two recurrent themes emerge, namely, aspects of materiality and the creation of memory, which are discussed in the light of ancient heritage paradoxes. This leads to the conclusion that the interaction of the tangible and intangible aspects of ASSI



heritage are best interpreted through ASSI-related memory sites, which share accessible and complementary components of materiality and narrative based presence. This chapter defines the research space and supports the thesis premise of a collated assemblage of ASSI-related memorials and memory sites as a focus for material engagement.

Chapter 3 (Theoretical Concepts - Liminal Spaces) considers the implications of an archaeology of ASSI memory through a customised integral framework to group concepts inherent in the complexity of the ASSI memory situation. This organises the perspectives of embedded historical memory, entangled formation processes, theoretical valuations and agency in social memory networks into a useable model to inform the interpretive chapters that follow.

Chapter 4 (The Memory Practices - Material Constructs) describes the collection methodology and recording policy leading to the presentation of the data that together make up the assemblage. From individual site biographies, a summarised format is extrapolated and then further reduced to present the thesis assemblage as variable categories of data from which frequency graphs are generated. In this way a concise, readable database provides a workable means to compare and contrast the most obvious features, while also having access to site specific details for reference and interpretative discussion.

Chapter 5 (Embedded Memory - Language Based) investigates the

embedded linguistic qualities of memorials to create and transfer versions of the past to public awareness. These include the narrative values of photographic and created imagery, the symbolic representation of script and the chronological effects of story telling that are represented through opposing messages.

Chapter 6 (Entangled Memory - Cognitive Meaning) considers the non-verbal communication transmitted through relational behavioural aspects enacted in placement and fabric choices. Where the historical narratives attached to ASSI-related memory sites can be understood to transfer a representative version of the past, it is the solid physicality of material objects that anchor these pasts in the physical format of material culture. In this way, embedded narratives and entangled placements reframe local histories, making these pasts visible in the public sphere.

Chapter 7 (Interactive Memory - Philosophical Constructs) alters the focus of attention from ASSI-related memory sites as versions of the past, to consider how they interact with the present day philosophical viewpoints of their supporting communities. This allows interpretation of the publicly accessible features of memorials, such as aesthetic presentation and form, that influence contemporary audiences on a level that provokes reaction and opens narratives, both of which influence the construction of local and national identity and historical awareness.

Chapter 8 (Networked Memory) retains the focus in the present, discussing the ASSI-related memory sites as nodes in networks of contemporary meaning. This uncovers their agency in the memory transmission process through the social dynamics and networked memory practices of human/material interactions. This focus on their relational trajectories as nodes in networked relationships, also extends to connections with time, linking them to the pasts they represent, as well as to new relationships with places and objects in evolving presents.

Chapter 9 (Thesis Conclusion) concludes the thesis, elucidating the contribution of this research towards understanding the complexities of human memory strategies in the post colonial arena of reconciling conflicting historical narratives. Offering an overall recap of the study, followed by a discussion addressing the thesis questions, the chapter concludes there thesis with suggestions for future related study foci.

## 1.6 Notes on Terminology

Social/collective/public memory - What's in a name? Many ASSI descendants do of course possess and actively pass down personal familial histories; memories transmitted in the form of spoken word, sometimes accompanied by memorabilia such as photographs, or sites specific to those individuals (Fatnowna 2002; Gabey 2013; Maclellan 2012). However, for the purposes of this thesis it is the broader, cumulative memory existing in local communities that is of interest. It is through this shared, group memory that communities identify and define themselves, expressing their claims to place, culture and belonging through the versions of the past that they agree to retell through narrative and physical representations (Anderson 1991:49; Olick & Robbins 1998: 117).

There are arguably subtle differences between the terms used to describe this shared memory, sometimes referred to as social, communal or public memory, according to the interpretation of the user. For example Young opposes the term collective memory with 'collected memory' to emphasise the inherently fragmented and wide ranging agendas of a community. He also avoids the term 'collective' because society's memory cannot exist outside of individual people (Young 1993:xi). Olick and Robbins in their research about social memory identified several other terminologies that have been used including 'official memory, vernacular memory, public memory, popular memory, local memory, family memory, historical memory, cultural memory...myth, tradition, custom and historical consciousness'

amongst others (Olick and Robbins 1998:112).

The actual concept of collective memory according to Halbwachs, who is credited with its introduction, is that various groups of people have different collective memories which influence their consequent behaviours and constructions of reality and use mental images in the present to reconstruct the past (Halbwachs 1992 translated by Coser). Extending this can liken it to that of Anderson's concept of nationalism which he describes as 'imagined communities' whose creation is also enabled by the reproduction of particular narratives (Anderson 1983:49). In a similar way it can be argued that the collective or public memory of a past is also imagined: an imagined past that is enabled through the production of images, narratives and other representational forms. Although actual events and people did in fact exist, happen and pepper the narratives that collective memories may chronicle, they are subjective, distant, foreign lands 'to which we no longer have an organic experiential relation' (Halbwachs 1992:38).

This ability to transmit information about things which do not actually exist physically, experientially or even temporally in an individual's present, is a crucial component of the human condition. It allows discourse on concepts such as 'social constructs' or 'imagined realities' and it is theorised that this particular ability for abstract communication was instrumental in the 'cognitive revolution' which appeared between 70 000 and 30 000 years ago and enabled sapiens 'not merely to imagine things, but to do so collectively'

(Harari 2014:25). This ability was arguably an important contributory factor for human propulsion to the top of the food chain as the capacity to transmit conceptual information in this way gave 'sapiens the unprecedented ability to cooperate flexibly in large numbers' (Harari 2014:25).

Despite this ancient inherited ability to cooperate however, the contestation surrounding an applicable term to refer to the generally accepted phenomena of a collective or social memory of the ASSI remains. The term 'social' memory too has issues for some archaeological interpretations because its meaning can be ambiguous, 'construed as a kind of material or domain ... [or used as an] explanation of some other state of affairs' (Latour 2005:1). Pollard explains a problem with language that refers to social entities such as social memory as 'presupposing both the existence of reified forms and a distinction between the "social" and other things, people, processes, relations. etc.' that results in an 'ontological separation of practices and of the material from the "social"' (Pollard 2013:174). Instead, he suggests, for archaeology 'the social needs to be relocated as emergent within networks/meshworks of interactions not just between humans, but within wider assemblages that take in other organisms, things, energies, performances, technologies, and so forth' (Pollard 2013:174).

The terminology arguments ultimately lead to a nature/culture divide. The terms 'collective memory' and 'social memory' may both presuppose a cultural entity, which somehow operates outside of the natural, human

individuals who make up the group community. Further, the application of either term to physical memorials may also presuppose an ontological separation, that is as material proxies via cultural practice taking the place of natural or actual human memories. Although there is merit and room to consider both of these positions within the thesis, the use of these (now) theoretically laden terms may limit the ability to discuss and reach conclusions from the data.

Further, although both terms are sometimes used interchangeably, important differences have been drawn. 'Social memory derives from a basis in shared experience, shared history or place, or a shared project [which] presupposes pre-existing relationships ... that one did not [necessarily] experience oneself but that were undergone by consociates ... and is often concerned with aspects of the relationships themselves' (Casey 2004:22-23).

Collective memory, in contrast, has no such basis but is instead distributed over a given population or set of places ... is formed spontaneously and involuntarily ... focused on a given topic: typically an event ... person or nation' (Casey 2004:22). From this point of definition then, for the thesis to refer to either social memory or collective memory would alienate one or other group of members of the local community, either by excluding the intimate group identities inherent in social memory, or by excluding the collective memory of people who have moved into the spatial location more recently, but who nevertheless may well hold 'memory' of the historical background of their extended community and place, but lack 'any shared basis in experience, history or place (Casey 2004:24).

However, both social and collective memory along with individual memory all contribute to public memory, 'an out in the open historic background that members of the public speak in terms of, that is revisable while also stabilising in any given direction of public events ... constituted from within a particular historical circumstance' (Casey 2004:25-26). While the other modes of remembering deal primarily with reminding us about the past, public memory 'is radically bivalent in its temporality ... both attached to a past [that] typically originates from an event of some sort and acts to ensure a future of further remembering of that same event' (Casey 2004:17). Therefore, as it is through the material evidence in contemporary public memory spaces that this thesis intends to gauge the physical representations of local communities' historical memory, 'public memory' will be the general term to discuss the ways in which the ASSI are remembered for the remainder of this thesis.



## **1.7 Memorials / Monuments**

Assigning a discernible difference to the words ‘monument’ and ‘memorial’ is a process open to conjecture. One school of thought assumes a binary position of functionality ‘presum[ing] that “memorials” recall only past deaths or tragic events and provide places to mourn, while “monuments” remain essentially celebratory markers of triumphs and heroic individuals’ (Young 1993:3). Extending this to consider the twin aspects of the human cognitive condition memory, that is remembering and forgetting, it has been asserted that ‘we erect monuments so that we shall always remember and build memorials so that we shall never forget’ (Danto in Young 2013:3).

However, in the course of this thesis’ research, and in general parlance, the two words have proven to be interchangeable, with both understood as a structure which serves to remind or recall a significant person or event. Monument comes from the Latin ‘monere’, which means to remind, to advise or to warn and may be construed as a commemoration effort that is designed to pay respect and honour someone or something perceived as crucial to the beliefs of the erecting society. For this reason monuments are often used to reinforce political or culturally significant ideologies. Memorial, on the other hand, from the Latin ‘memoria’, meaning memory, may be understood to serve more as a general reminder, a statement of fact, or to focus on the memory of someone or something now passed. This includes landmark objects, gravestones and war memorials as well as all monuments.

For the purposes of this thesis then, all styles of memory sites or commemorative structure will be referred to as memorials so as to remove any perception of preconceived meaning or bias inherent in choosing between the two terms. Thinking of Australian memorials in this way, as efforts of materialising memory, supports the premise that memory arises from the mutual engagement between person and world, is not merely data stored in the mind, but ‘emerges through intersubjective experience with the material world’ (Jones 2007:41).

Memorials, as the physical representatives of personal experience, can be construed to represent noteworthy people or events ‘by proxy’. In other words, the memorials act as the agents, or substitutes for past events. Much like Pacific Islands sand designs, memorials represent and illustrate a culturally-specific historical narrative, albeit in a form that doesn’t outwardly involve the recipient as an inclusive holder of the narrative, but imagines them as a viewer, rather than a participant. However, the relationship between the past event and the memorial isn’t a static one-to-one. Memorials depend on the contemporary context at the time of their creation for their particular interpretation, materialised through their scale, form, design and wording. Like a translation, there is a choice of substitutions which will be different in different contemporary contexts. Further, future viewers will also interpret and perceive meaning from them in different ways depending on personal, cultural and educational prerogatives. This can be understood as another nature/culture divide. The natural solidity of rock for example, when

used as a memory object, takes on a cultural meaning which is also capable of delivering different messages to different viewers. Lydon writes of this as:

The irony of material culture is that its very inertia lends it an objectivity and autonomy that appears to evade ideology, seemingly reflecting the natural state of things, yet its meaning is mutable, altering according to circumstance. Its very durability allows its meanings to be interpreted and re-interpreted over long periods of time, in processes of re-valuation and re-inscription (Lydon 2005:112).

Australian memorials, therefore, as modes of cultural heritage delivery, play an important role in transmitting the memory of a communal past. This suggests that existing commemorative memorials related to the ASSI indentured labour event can be re-evaluated in terms of their roles in constructing identity and locality in communities. In this way an ideal foundation for linking a comprehensive Australian heritage for South Sea Islanders is possible, with the potential to further animate and connect disjointed pieces of oral and textual history without losing individual localised content and identity.

## 1.8 Conclusion

Chapter 1 has introduced the overarching focus of this thesis: to explore and discuss, through the lens of the Australian South Sea Islander indentured labour event, how we might understand the interpretive challenges posed by a lack of material culture when considering relationships of public memory and materiality and the questions which emerge from considering those challenges in an archaeological context. The concept of a nature/culture divide regarding memory was introduced, contrasting the natural capacity of individual humans to remember (nature) with different cultural practices such as memorials or sand drawings used as external structures to represent, maintain, transmit or give a physical dimension to these memories (culture). This divide was also identified in the properties of memorials themselves, at once static in their physicality, while also fluid in their ability to be reinterpreted. Finally, it was determined that despite localised oral histories and memorials, memory of the ASSI in the Australian national narrative however, remains intangible, seemingly invisible to broader contemporary public memory despite having a presence in local history culture narratives and individual memories. This suggests a lack of cohesion, rather than a lack of memory.

It is this broader collective memory of past times that is the key element to redressing the ASSI representational imbalance within the Australian (hi)story. All the relatively discrete ways, 'commemorations, museum displays, statuary, historic houses, historical writing, films, image-making,

graveside orations and the myriad ways in which relationships between past and present are performed can be thought of as constituting social memory [and] displac[ing] history onto the larger field of memory' (Healy 1997:4-5). This memory makeup is further compounded by competing historiographical threads of the indentured labour event, and by archaeological challenges and limitations to the determining of material culture connections of ASSI people to historical place, which are discussed in the following chapter. The overriding issue therefore can be construed not as a lack of memory, but as a lack of cohesion to enable a fuller story, including competing narratives, to emerge into current social awareness. This thesis introduces the premise that historical archaeology can provide the connective platform to facilitate this outcome.

The following chapter contextualises the Islander situation in Australia and details relationships of current ASSI heritage with previous historiographical texts and archaeology to understand the circumstances that have led to their representational issues, and thus the gap this thesis addresses.

## CHAPTER 2: Research Context - Literatures

**'A society without a memory is a dysfunctional society. And much of a society's memory is encapsulated within its cultural property – the physical remains of the past – its books, archives, art, historic buildings and landscapes, and its archaeological sites. Lose that cultural property and you are very close to losing collective memory' (Stone 2014:1).**

### 2.1 Introduction

A particular strength of historical archaeology is the capacity to use written records and oral traditions to inform and contextualise material culture which thereby enables a focus on people and processes outside those represented by the records or objects alone. As a result, historical archaeology helps track the role of these histories in the present world, not only as precursors and trendsetters, but also as public memories and heritage that are sometimes forgotten, sometimes memorialized, sometimes distorted, but always mobilized for a multitude of purposes (Hall and Silliman 2006:3).

In the case of this study, the history under focus is that of ASSI indentured labourers and the ways in which their participation in the colonial period of Australian history is remembered or forgotten in the present day. Chapter 2 will consider the work of other historians and archaeologists to understand previous methodologies for extracting meaning from related historical texts

and material culture, and how these enhance the historical narrative surrounding the ASSI event amid the tensions inherent in contemporary debates.

As this study begins from a present day position which thereby includes all related past details, it is important to understand these historical strands as part of an on-going societal process of which this study is also a part. Elaborating the research context of the thesis by investigating the cultural landscape of South Sea Islanders in Australia thus situates this study against the backdrop of broader theoretical trends in ASSI historiography and historical archaeology. Reviewing these literatures is important to determine where the thesis approach fits into, and differs from, existing historical and archaeological research. This section evaluates:

- The events that have led to representational imbalance and how they speak to the current situation
- The complex reasons that have resulted in the paucity of discernible material culture that hinders materially based archaeological investigations
- The strengths and challenges to historical archaeology when investigating public memory
- Previous methods and theories utilised in academic research of the ASSI
- Issues that impact Islander heritage in Australia

The format begins with a brief chronological outline of South Sea Islanders in Australia, followed by an overview of the key theoretical, methodological and analytical approaches that have been undertaken in connected literatures.



### **2.1.1 The ASSI Cultural Landscape and Heritage Paradox**

According to archaeologist Iain Davidson, the legitimization of heritage turns upon the interaction of two heritage paradoxes (Davidson 2015). The first, the song of Homer paradox, questions the veracity of consequent versions of a story and the second, the ship of Theseus paradox, asks whether an object which has had all of its components replaced remains fundamentally the same. For the ASSI these can be construed via the two key themes of memory and materiality and chapter 2 now loosely organises around these paradoxes in order to discuss and provide a broad overview of the key impacts to current situations of public memory and archaeological research.

Where, for the ship of Theseus paradox, the tangible, material authenticity of a ship's replaced wood is at issue, for the ASSI it is their physical participation in the Australian story. Is the ship the same ship even if the wood has been replaced? Is the role of ASSI labour in colonial Australia part of the same historical Australian narrative even if their presence is thoroughly entangled within industrial infrastructure? This questions the qualities of the heritage of place as well as the differing ways that people conceive of cultural heritage in ways that may be 'unrelated to the ontologies of archaeology and heritage conservation' (Byrne 2014:1). Can today's Queensland cane industry landscapes be understood as the same places that ASSI people cleared and toiled to establish, even in the paucity of discernible material culture to connect them to those places? Concurrently, for the song of Homer paradox, the intangible elements of oral traditions contrasted with textual

records are key. Does the written version of a song necessarily lay claim to its authenticity? Do the oral histories of the ASSI carry less legitimacy than those of colonial textual documentation?

Applying these paradoxes to ASSI heritage has the effect of highlighting the critical post-colonial social issue that prompted the central premise of this thesis, prompting questions of historical and heritage veracity in the absence of discernible material evidences. The paradoxes can thus be applied to question the position of ASSI heritage claims and the role of archaeology to verify the oral histories of Islander descendants. Is there an Australian South Sea Islander cultural heritage or indeed a role for archaeology to investigate intangible claims without supporting material evidence from the past? This chapter considers the implications of these paradoxes for the legitimisation of an Australian heritage for South Sea Islanders.

## 2.2 Paradox One: The Song Of Homer

The historical background of ASSI labour in colonial Queensland provides information about how events have transpired to create the current situation of contested 'songs' of the Australian sugar story and ASSI heritage. These are discussed here via categories of Islander representation.

### 2.2.1 Historical Representation

Cane fields are a quintessential feature of north eastern Australia. The far north Queensland landscape is characterised by waving fields of sugar plants, sugar train networks and smoking sugar mills. Australian popular culture has bestowed a romantic nature to this industry, as illustrated within the lyrics of Australian band 'Ganggajang' in their 1985 song 'This is Australia':

Out on the patio we'd sit  
And the humidity we'd breathe  
We'd watch the lightning crack over cane-fields  
Laugh and think that this is Australia

Evoking more than a mere visual image, the song embodies quintessential Australian national identity, transporting listeners to a time and place reminiscent of a younger, happier, relaxed and archetypically Australian lifestyle. Reinforcing this nostalgic approach, the alternative name of the song is 'Sounds of Then', and further lyrics evoke and exploit the tropical climate and way of life in this area:

That certain texture, that certain smell  
Brings forth the heavy days  
Brings forth the night time sweat

With pride and affection, the Australian sugar industry and associated way of life is considered a worthy component of our cultural identity and nationalistic toolkit. The well known sugar product 'Bundaberg Rum' is familiar to many Australians, whether or not they have ever visited the area of Queensland in which it is manufactured, with 'Bundy and coke' a standard drink in any Australian pub. However, the historical background to this sweet industry is not as well known.

Originally established in colonial times between 1863 to 1901, the Australian sugar industry transported around 60 000 Melanesian people directly from traditional ways of life on Pacific Islands into northern Australia to satisfy labour requirements for the establishment of colonial plantations (Griggs 2011:45; Hayes 2002:77). Arriving for the most part from various islands of the Vanuatu archipelago and the Solomon Islands, they generally came without possessions and evidence suggests initial episodes of kidnapping and coercion tactics to fill recruitment ships (Evans et al. 1993:156; Hayes 2002:77).

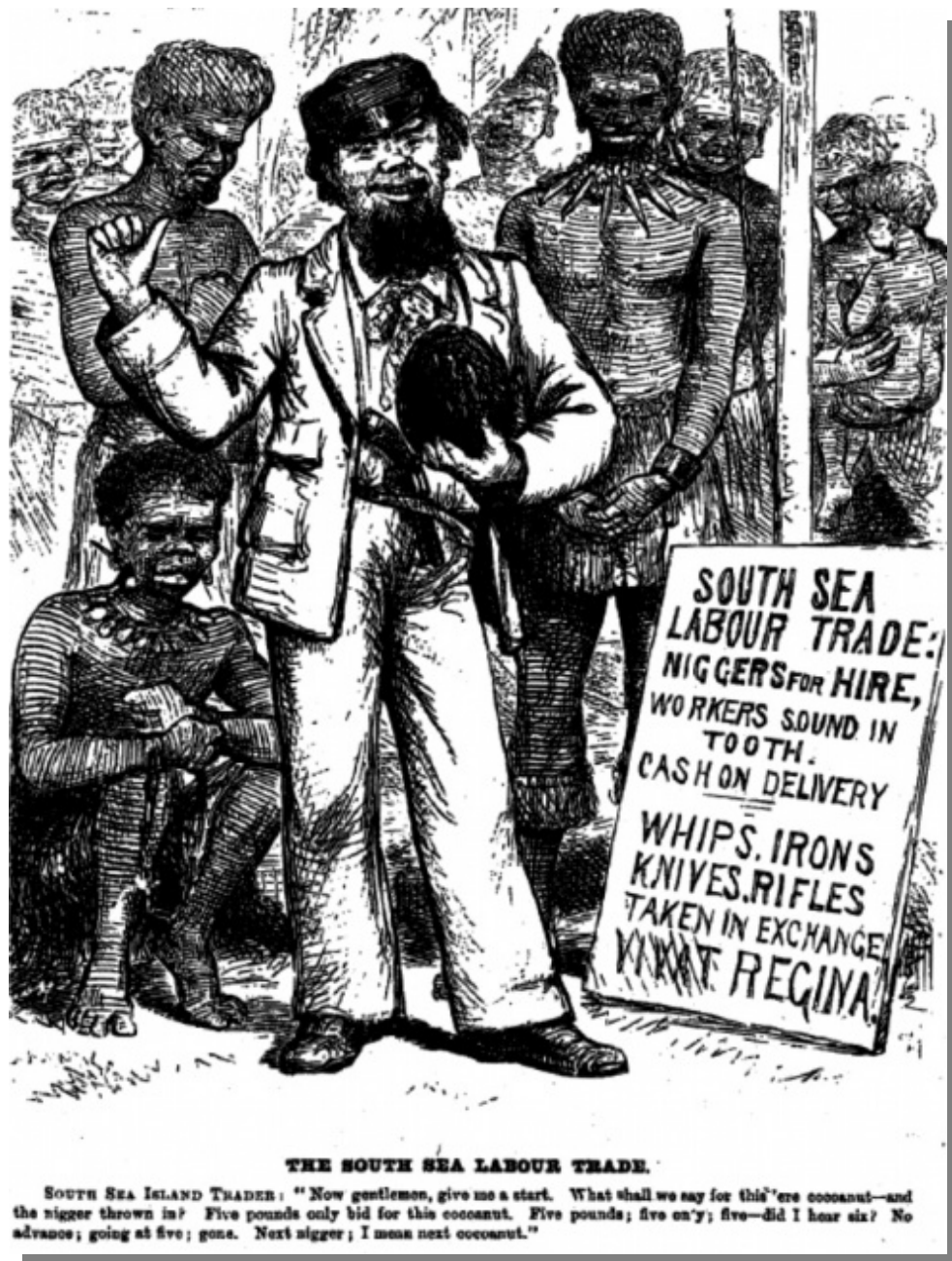
Some were indentured, bound to work for periods of time before deportation, but overall, the exact circumstances of recruitments remain disparate and contentious (Gabey 2013:1; Irvine 2004:4; Kerr 1995:15; Wills 2011:23).



**Figure 2.1: South Sea Islanders outside of a plantation building ca. 1870 (State Library of Queensland, Negative no: 189100)**

This use of Melanesian labour originated from an essentialist view of human characteristics, expressing itself in the opinion that white people were not suited to physical toil in the tropical conditions, unlike darker skinned people (Evans et al. 1993:155). This was a common view at the time, as evidenced by the contemporary comment by a Mackay plantation owner that ‘it has been conclusively proved ... that white men cannot and will not do the work done by niggers in the field’ (Finch-Hatton 1886 quoted in Evans et al. 1993:158).





**Figure 2.2: Cartoon in *The Bulletin* 1886 of auction of South Sea Islander (Wikimedia Commons)**

Added to this were the mercenary considerations of cost and supply for the labour-intensive toil of establishing colonial plantations. Following precedents established since the 1500s, such as the trade in African workers to America, the West Indies and South America, the use of a Melanesian workforce was

integral to early Australian colonial plantation expansion. However, by the turn of the 20th century, with an established sugar industry well under way and an increased labour market as a result of the gold rush influx of Europeans, this colonialist perception of inherent racial abilities had altered to advance exclusionary racist ideas:

It has been said the climate where the sugar cane grows is unsuited to the white man, and that if the blackfellow is to go the sugar must go with him [but] it is a well-known fact that the white man can stand the climate of North Queensland much better than the puny Polynesian, and for a fair wage can do his work vastly better (McCulloch 1901:3).

With the Federation of Australia in 1901, which included policies that intentionally favoured immigration to Australia from certain European countries, the Melanesian workforce was deported as part of what became known as the 'White Australia Policy'. A review of official Acts between 1862 and 1906 outlines the treatment of South Sea Islanders within Australia (Irvine 2004:30-31; Mercer 1981:197), testifying to lengthy cultural alienation and liminality. These controls ranged from an initial act to allow the importation of 'coloured' labour (Coolie Act 1862), through restrictions on becoming naturalised as British citizens (Aliens Act 1867), licensing of recruiting ships to govern abuses within recruiting and transportation (*Polynesian* [wrongly named] Labourers Act 1868 and 1877) and various measures to control employment options and wages in the intervening years, to an act designed to force deportation as part of the *Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901 and 1906*.

Although most South Sea Islanders ultimately faced mandatory expulsion, up to 2,000 Islanders remained in Australia (Maclellan 2012:1; Quanchi 1998:3), and their experiences of non-inclusion in the host society continued with the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, designed to prohibit the employment of 'certain forms of labour in the production of sugar' (Queensland State Archives Online 2014). This act essentially prevented 'aliens' from countries including China, India, Malaya, and South Sea or Pacific Islands from working in the sugar industry by means of an imposed dictation test in 'such language as the Secretary for Agriculture may direct'.



**Figure 2.3: South Sea Islanders Queensland, 1906 (State Library of Queensland, Negative no: 23815)**



Some 40 pieces of discriminatory Queensland legislation between 1900 and 1940 applied to South Sea Islanders who stayed on in Australia (Mercer 1995:140). Referring to the Islanders explicitly or designed to have particular effects on them, these acts can be read as an abbreviated history of the ASSI experience in Australia. It is apparent even from these brief descriptions that, from the onset, the Islanders were treated as a commodity (for example the Polynesian Labourers Act 1868 which regulated licences to import natives), and that recruitment circumstances were contentious (as in the Pacific Islanders Protection Act of 1872 and 1875, both of which reacted to kidnapping and other criminal offences against Islanders).

Their conditions and treatment once in Australia were also less than salubrious, with provisions outlining medical, food 'rations' and dress allowances tabled as late as twenty years after the first recruits arrived (Pacific Islands Labourers Act 1880). Subsequent acts attest to the extent of Islander labour utilised by the early colonial settlers through legislation designed to control employment and personal options (Pacific Islands Labourers Act 1884), financial compensations to employers without Islander labourers (Pacific Islanders' Employers' Compensation Act 1885), and ensuing immigration and deportation restrictions following Federation in 1901.

**Table 2.1: Australian Acts Specific to South Sea Islands Labour (Queensland Government State Archives)**

| DATE | ACT   | DESCRIPTION  |
|------|---|--|
| 1868 | Polynesian Labourers Act 1868                                 | Dealt with licenses to import, guarantee of native return, number to be recruited, scale of provisions, and prohibition of liquor.   |
| 1872 | Pacific Islanders Protection Act 1872<br>Amended in 1875      | Protection of Pacific Islanders from kidnapping and other criminal offences.   |
| 1880 | Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880<br>Repealed the Act of 1868 | Provided for regulation and control of the introduction and treatment of labourers from the Pacific Islands. Limited the age of recruits. Return to proper islands. Provision of medical treatments. Provision of rations and dress allowance. |
| 1884 | Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1884    | More restrictive legislation confining labour to unskilled agricultural pursuits. Crews to be paid wages. No fire arms to be supplied to islanders. Limit recruiting operations further.   |
| 1885 | Pacific Islanders' Employers' Compensation Act 1885           | Compensation to employers whose employees had returned by order of the Government.   |
| 1886 | Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 Amendment Act of 1885       | Prohibited further importation of labourers after 31st December 1890.  |

| DATE      | ACT   | DESCRIPTION   |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1887      | Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 Amendment Act of 1886 | Amended the definition of Pacific Islanders.  |
| 1892      | Pacific Island Labourers (Extension) Act of 1892        | Repeal of prohibition.  |
| 1901      | Immigration Restriction Act 1901                        | Commonwealth. Received Royal Assent on 23 December 1901. It was described as an Act “to place certain restrictions on immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited immigrants.” ref: Dept Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs Fact Sheet 8 |
| 1901-1906 | Pacific Islands Labourers Act 1901                      | Commonwealth. Decreed that there should be no further entry of Islanders after 31 March 1901. After that date deportation was to follow, with some exemptions.  |
| 1913      | Sugar Cultivation Act 1913                              | Designed to prohibit the employment of ‘certain forms of labour in the production of sugar’.  |

Estimates of descendant numbers are now at around 40,000 people (Ingram 2013:2), who, despite government acknowledgment of their presence in Australia in 1994, report that ‘nothing has truly been followed through’ in the

ensuing twenty years (Ingram 2013: 2; Worthington 2014:1), and are currently continuing their efforts to be included as a separate ethnic group in the 2016 national census. Recognising the need for a formal structure to present a unified voice, descendants have set up an interim national body, the WANTOK Australian South Sea Islanders National Forum, to facilitate communication with the government on a political level (Ingram 2013:4; Worthington 2014:1). WANTOK, is Bislama for 'one talk' meaning one voice.



**Figure 2.4: WANTOK Representatives (SBS News 7 November 2013)**

Present day understandings surrounding Islander arrivals and their consequent experiences are still under discussion, and nomenclatures such

as 'Blackbirds', 'Kanakas' and 'Sugar Slaves' persist (Irvine 2004:3; Quanchi 1998:3; Worthington 2014:1). In 2003 the Courier Mail newspaper ran an article head-lined 'Islanders take offence at the name Kanakas' and, as recently as September 2014, 'a motion [was] presented in Federal Parliament expressing regret over the treatment of thousands of South Sea Islanders brought to Australia in the 1800s' (ABC News 2014:1). It was not until 1994 that the Australian South Sea Islander Community was officially recognised as a distinct ethnic minority group, following a report by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission which found that they had become more disadvantaged than Indigenous Australians (Flanagan et al. 2011; Ingram 2013:3).

Nomenclature such as this in historiographical and other texts may be construed as archaeological markers when considered in situ in physical form such as when inscribed in memorials, and as street or waterway names. The Isis shire council for example, chose to erect an extensive series of memorial sculptures dedicated to telling the history of local ASSI people as part of their centenary of federation celebrations in 2001. Throughout the installations, the Islanders are consistently referred to as 'the Kanakas' as in figure 2.5, extending even to references to subsequent generations as in 'Descendants of the Kanakas cut and bundled the burnt cane'. In contrast, the ASSI descendant community input at the same installations read somewhat differently, as in 'We, the Australian South Sea Islanders are proud of what our people accomplished'.





**Figure 2.5: The Isis Memorial Childers, Queensland (Author's photo 23 October 2013)**

One plaque inset in the ground addresses the issue of Islander nomenclature in poetry form:

I tell a piece of our history  
my father told to me.  
To explain why lots  
Of South Sea people  
Live in this country.  
They fetched them by the thousands.  
Weren't worried about their age,  
Put them to work in this new land,  
Treated them as slaves.  
Our sugar industry was born  
Upon their very backs,  
Upon the sweat, blood and deaths  
Of these South Sea people  
They called Kanaks.  
The government finally decided,

“We can’t have that.  
Put them in the boats  
And take the Kanakas back”.  
Some of them stayed.  
Called home this new land.  
Now we, their direct descendants,  
Can proudly stand.  
Now Australian South Sea Islanders.

Under this lens, from the perspective of discourse analysis that views words as semiotic markers, contentious words such as ‘blackbird’, ‘kanaka’, ‘cannibal’, ‘discrimination’ and ‘violence’ may be seen as pointers to the stance adopted by the authors of historiography and can also be interpreted as active examples of how perceptions are influenced by the values embedded in language choices in the physical world.

These values, influenced by changing societal values over time can be seen in Holthouse’s provocative use of the dynamic word ‘cannibal’. In the original title of his 1969 work, *Cannibal Cargoes*, ‘cannibal’ became benign when linked to the static imagery of the word ‘cargoes’. Already disempowered by their situation as a commodity (‘cargoes’), rather than a group of human passengers, the powerful image of threatening cannibalistic warriors is placed in the impotent position of being locked up as a component of freight. Diluted still further in the 1986 edition’s extended title, *Cannibal Cargoes: The Story of the Australian Blackbirders*, Holthouse’s focus was subtly altered to the ‘blackbirders’, that is, the recruiters themselves, rather than the recruited.

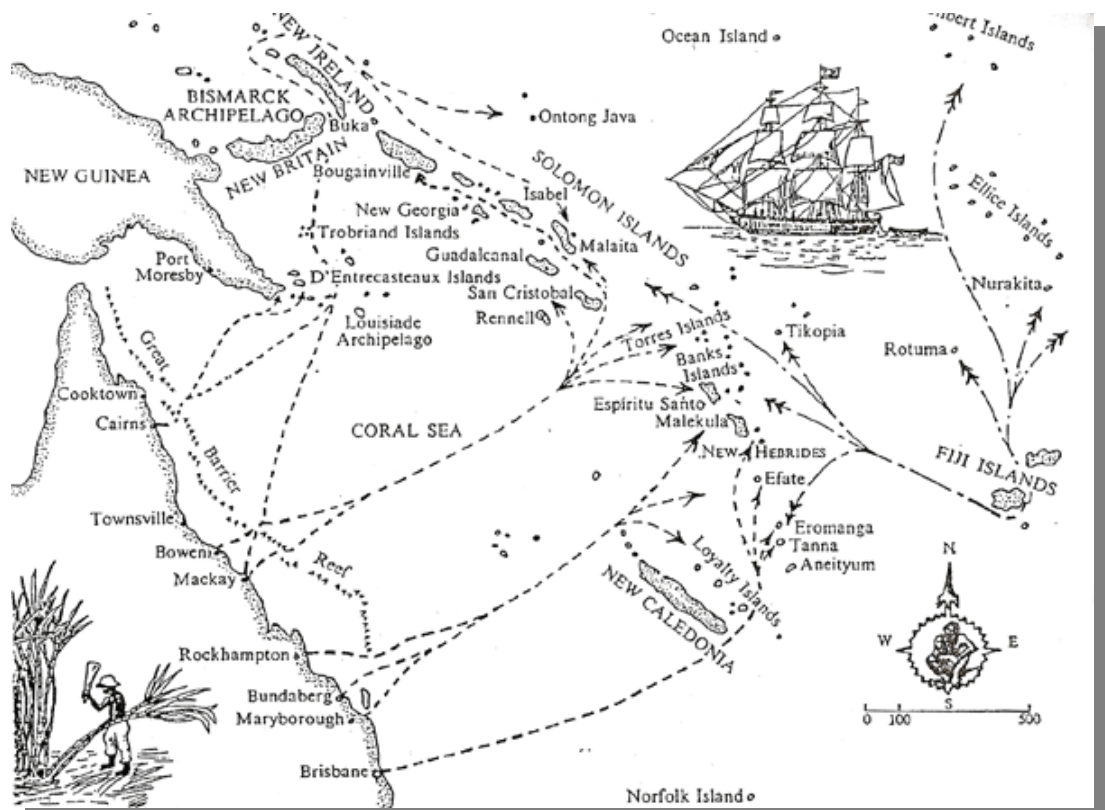
This could, however, work both ways and be argued to reflect a growing post-colonial awareness of past racism and therefore a tactical repackaging of the original book designed to appeal to a broader audience. Extending this concept, the word 'blackbirding', according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2014), is 'the 19th- and early 20th-century practice of enslaving (often by force and deception) South Pacific Islanders on the cotton and sugar plantations of Queensland, Australia'. Its use, particularly in titles, suggests an expected knowledge of the existence of this practice by both the author and the reading audience.

Lingual indicators of this type, used in legislative, general and historiographical media, can be read as semiotic markers or symbolic categories that spill over to influence community discourse and attitudes and are also then contained within material culture, such as memorials and place names. In this way, the song of Homer paradox can be seen in situ: the song unites all in the audience who know the words. This version becomes a component of the communal cultural landscape and heritage. This extends to identity, including the specific character of an area, that is a product of social construction, acquiring meaning in the midst of differences as people retain those components perceived as having permanent value in their space and time (van der Valk 2010:28).

This is particularly compounding for the ASSI identity, as they are not a homogeneous group due to the methods of colonial recruitment and



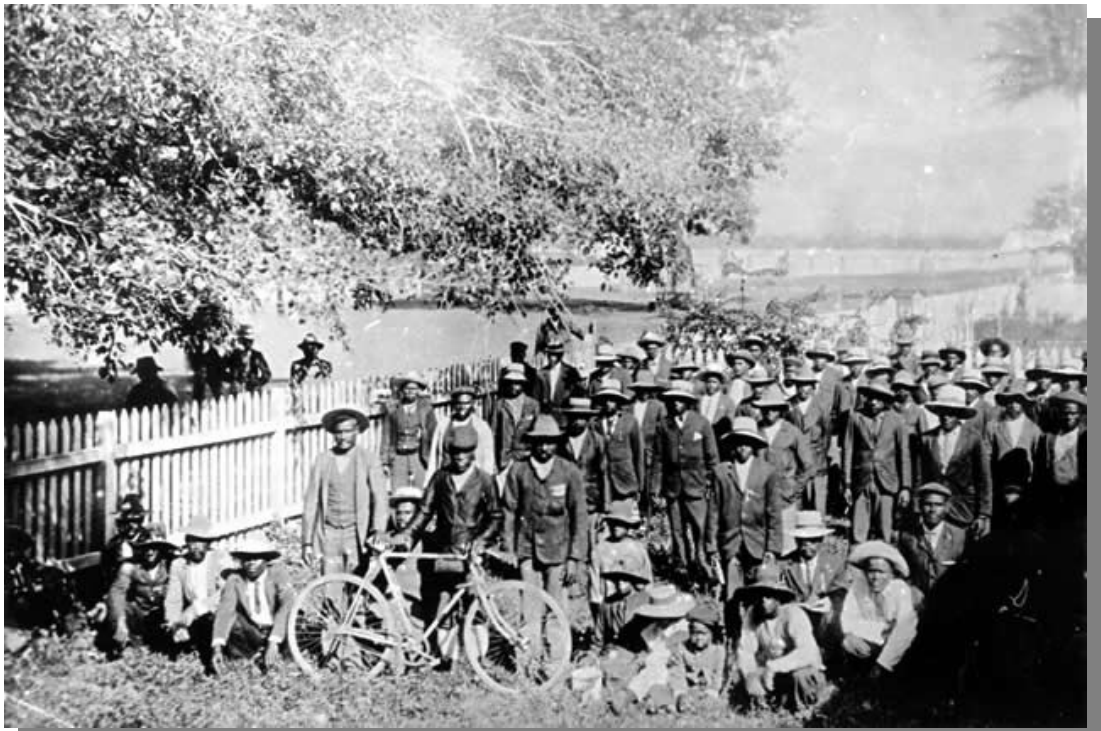
plantation management. Originally workers were collected from across more than 80 islands (Mercer 1981:10-12; Irvine 2004:3; Queensland State Archives 2014), speaking many separate dialects and valuing a wide range of cultural specifics. Despite their consequent dispersal to cotton and sugar locations across thousands of kilometres along the Australian coast, and the prevention by colonial overseers of ASSI workers speaking their own dialects or practicing their culture on plantations (Gabey 2013:2), individuals maintained and passed down knowledge of a background and 'distinct culture ... aside from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or any other culture' (Gabey 2013:2).



**Figure 2.6: Islander traffic routes 1863 to 1902, from "The Blackbirders" (Docker 1970)**

The fragmentation of descendant groups has therefore been exacerbated by distance and affected by the haphazard recruitment practices which collected people from widely different islands on the one ship, and delivered them to different areas in Queensland (Docker 1970), separating and isolating people from others of the same Island of origin.

Consequently, there are now ASSI descendants with 'various types of identity that [they] use in terms of how they identify as Australian South Sea Islanders today (Worthington 2014:1). This spatial and social fragmentation of the Islander sense of community illustrates the complications of post-colonial situations, especially compounded in this case by traditional Islander practices of 'Kastom', a complex system of cultural values that privilege loyalties to family and place (Gistitin 1995:91). The adherence to Kastom has further fragmented identities, since it has over-ridden 'the expediency of [an ASSI] political unity [as] family, region, island-of-origin, gender and age differences acted to break up the sense of [an encompassing ASSI] community' (Quanchi 1998:6). and despite being removed by generations from islands of origin, demonstrates the endurance of cultural heritage within the descendant population. Added to this, omissions from both hegemonic record keeping and the national historical narrative mean that the ASSI have been denied a textual, documentary connection into mainstream Australian awareness, and ASSI descendants are still inhabiting a liminal position, deprived of heritage acknowledgement and an associated sense of belonging.



**Figure 2.7: Islanders waiting for deportation in Cairns 1906 (State Library of Queensland, Negative no: 23842)**

As Harrison contends regarding archaeological research in New South Wales, 'It is not necessary to suggest that both settler and Aboriginal Australians experienced or understood ... life and work ... in exactly the same way' (Harrison 2004:52). So it is with Australian South Sea Islanders' experiences in the sugar industry of Queensland. Colonial histories are well known to involve spatial and industrial expansions that impacted people from markedly different cultural experiences, changing them and their landscapes beyond a point of ever being the same again. This is certainly the case with the Pacific Islands people whose home islands were altered by the sheer numbers of their leaving (Craig 2014; Munro 1995a; O'Hanlon & Welsch 2000; Rivers 1922) and by the changed nature of the returnees who had adopted various influences in their time away (McLellan 2012).

It is also true for the many who stayed in Australia, further impacted by marriages with Indigenous people or people from other islands or countries, while establishing new lives adapting and participating in their changed circumstances. Their physical efforts and prolonged presence have, as Harrison noted for a different context, 'created a cross-cultural conversation that has had a significant impact on the development of the Australian national identity' (Harrison 2004:52). However, the dominant Australian national narrative, the story we tell ourselves about the country's history, which can be considered as the country's memory of its past, struggles to remember their participation or existence, even though remembering the ASSI past has an important role in understanding present day Australia.



**Figure 2.8: Board Game copyrighted in 1914 (National Archives Australia ID: 3423240)**

While the struggle for recognition of their own cultural identity is on-going, this separation has greatly compromised the construction of a comprehensive, overarching ASSI narrative within which each fragmented community can meet and from which they can be understood by the broader Australian community. Several regional Islander organisations are actively collecting intangible cultural heritage in the form of family and location specific oral histories, but even though oral histories are informing historiographies (Fatnowna 2002; Gabey 2013; Lake 2002; Moore 2001), they remain regionally specific. This has resulted in a lack of cohesion or a sense of connection to the whole ASSI descendant narrative within communities or to temporal or spatial themes in the dominant narrative of Australian history.

In this way, the song of Homer paradox emerges to illustrate the structural anomaly of the presence of ASSI in Australia's national narrative. Deprived of a voice through legislature, nomenclature and cultural linguistic practices across generations, the song of the ASSI descendants is currently struggling to be heard, compounded by the presence of alternate versions evident from segregated communities and documentary evidence. This complicated situation is apparent also in the 'songs' of past historiographical research.

### **2.2.2 Historiographical Representation**

Echoing the inconsistencies observed in historic records and ASSI identity status, multiple historiographic approaches relying on various methods of approach and a post-colonial focus in the social sciences, also sing to the song of Homer paradox (Lal 1992; Lal and Hempenstall 2001; Moore 1985; O'Hanlon and Welsch 2000). These studies have tended to adopt particular foci, and it is possible to recognise the evolution of certain contemporary issues surrounding the ASSI situation in the literature as thematic approaches to writing have shifted to encompass themes of capitalism, industrialisation, scale, identity, agency and representation. These indicate an emergent pattern of change in social awareness as the event trajectory has played out over the last 150 years with comparable themes to those traditionally used in historical archaeology, such as 'scale, agency, materiality, meaning, identity, and representation' (Hall and Silliman 2006:8).





**Figure 2.9: Bundaberg South Sea Islanders Anniversary Festival Poster 2013 (Bundaberg Regional Council)**

The literature reviewed presented an overall trend of representational tension permeating all aspects of the indentured labour event, extending from past contentions regarding initial recruitment histories, through cultural attributes

and positioning within Australian social structures, to contemporary ownership of ASSI histories. These considerations advise that consensus as well as dissensus is present among historians, and so may perhaps be expected to appear and be supported in communities' public memory and efforts to memorialise.

Some researchers favour a generalised spatial and/or temporal approach, such as used in *Passage, Port and Plantation: A History of Solomon Islands Labour Migration, 1870-1914* (Corris 1973), *In the Land of Strangers: A Century of European Contact with Tanna 1774-1874* (Adams 1984); and *The South Sea Islanders of Mackay, Queensland, Australia* (Moore 2001). Historiographies such as these, concerned with the logistics and effects of the ASSI diaspora, provide detailed research sourced from quantifiable data, based on historic records, reports, tallies, passenger lists and other written texts, and occasional documented oral histories. This style of historiography is particularly useful to locate the ASSI in time and place.

Studied from opposite ends of the ASSI labour event and concerning different places, people and therefore experiences, these titles hint at the challenges to an overarching ASSI indentured labour heritage story. They share underlying structural details from the same colonial 'songbook', that is, one of indigenous people transported to provide the muscle power to establish western industries. However, as these each consider particular foci, such as the islands of origin, recruitment journeys, plantations experiences, effects of

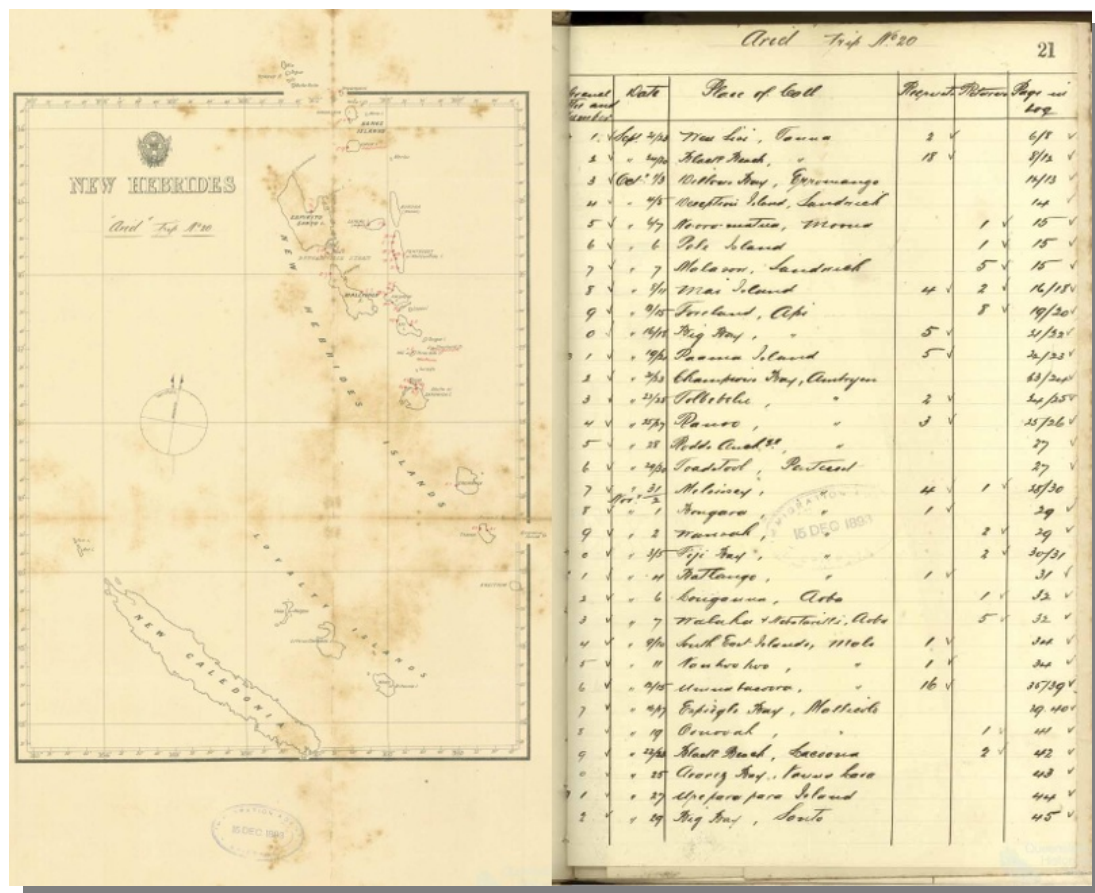


these happenings on personal, cultural and national levels, and so on, the songs become as individual as they are the same, as dissimilar in detail as they are similar in tune. And all are authentic songs.

Other researchers have focused on the broad context of labour history, with contributions including the contentious recruitment methods surrounding ASSI transport, such as in *Blackbirders, the Recruiting of South Seas Labour for Queensland 1863-1907* (Docker 1970); *The Labour Trade in Melanesians to Queensland: An Historiographic Essay* (Munro 1995); and *From Blackbirds to Guestworkers in the South Pacific. Plus ça Change ...?* (Connell 2010), published in the Economic and Labour Relations Review.

Taking a step back from physical logistics, this style of research investigates the mechanisms of labour relations in a more qualitative, theoretical vein, considering the social contexts of this particular diaspora. Studies from a labour perspective can offer ways to recognise the contribution of labour to the development of contemporary societies, and provide historical entry points for accessing groups such as the ASSI, who were without written or physical agency in the material record. As Silliman points out:

... without a focus on labour relations and the complexity of shared places and things, the material contributions to history made by Indigenous people in Colonial worlds are frequently closed off in academic and public discourse because these individuals had little power to make, use, or direct material culture in colonial spaces where they laboured (Silliman 2010:151).



**Figure 2.10: Islands visited by labour vessel Ariel in 1893 (Queensland State Archives, Item ID1235095, Correspondence)**

This style of research again adds verses to the song of the ASSI story. In most cases, these are unifying verses of sorts, as studies along such themes tend to encompass a more macro view of labour histories and their place in industrialisation stories, although there is then the inherent danger of the actual labouring people being lost in the big picture trajectory.

Labour aspects of the ASSI story also form a distinct material culture taphonomy, connecting the remembering of the ASSI to their early roles in clearing and maintaining the sugarcane, viewing the Islanders as an

extension of sugar growing technology; a labour commodity rather than people. Here again, the risk is that commemorative material culture may have failed to keep the labour relations aspect in perspective. For example, even when a region's industrial heritage is recognised, often 'there is little public awareness of the labour that made industrialisation possible' (Chidester 2004:3). Also present is the added danger of using the ASSI labour event as a tourism generating commodity via such strategies, as 'many countries around the world are transitioning from sugar production as industry to utilising sugar heritage for tourism' (Joliffe 2013:15).

Again the song of Homer paradox is at work, asking whether the more individual ASSI songs of scale, singing of particular times or places, are the same songs as those encompassing labour and industrialisation. This leads to a similar category of research focused on the economic impacts of the Pacific Islands labour event. Examples include Helen Irvine's (2004) well researched financial perspective, *Sweet and Sour: Accounting for South Sea Islander Labour at a North Queensland Sugar Mill in the Late 1800s*; and Flanagan, Wilkie and Iuliano's 2011 *Australian South Sea Islanders. A century of Race Discrimination under Australian law: The Role of South Sea Islanders in Australia's Economic Development*, which was published for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. These present aspects of the ASSI story translated into numbers, which often relates more to industrialisation songs than to remembering the people who laboured to create these numbers, and runs the risk of subsuming them into 'data'.

### **2.2.3 Concluding the Song of Homer**

In order to contextualise memory sites as physical connectors to intangible ASSI pasts, chapter 2 has so far reviewed historiographic research approaches and contemporary narratives. Likened to the paradoxical question of whether the final version of *The Odyssey* is the same story as the one Homer originally told, the validity of past and current versions of ASSI heritage stories was similarly questioned.

The historiographic literature shows that, although the various historiographical approaches used to research ASSI have been focused through individual windows of interest, they are also united in other respects. For example, ASSI historiography has recurrently been approached from the position of ‘other’, where the Islanders are represented as a dormant group of native Melanesians, originally recruited, having their circumstances controlled, and now written about, by hegemonic active others. The academic literature is predominantly written by people from other cultural backgrounds, resulting in the Pacific Islanders themselves not being represented effectively in their own written histories.

Lal and Hempenstall (2001:3) liken this to ‘artificial lines drawn by outsiders, like those defining so-called culture areas of the Pacific, which determine how outsiders see them (“primitive” Melanesians versus “noble” Polynesians): [which] create states of mind which even the “insiders” subscribe to’. Historian Hank Nelson shares these concerns about ASSI

historiographic representation, asserting that long running fears about entitlement and exclusion affect who speaks or has the right to be heard, even whose view of the world is the correct one. He goes so far as to call Pacific historiography 'a shifting battleground which manifests itself in skirmishes in academic journals and at conferences [which] may never be resolved' (Nelson 2001:4).

The reviewed literature supports these claims of representational inequalities and divergent interests, but also demonstrates an awareness and willingness on the part of academic research to confront the ASSI position in Australian history. This contrasts with the common perception of an ASSI amnesia amongst the broader Australian community. The literature also goes some way towards explaining the contemporary apparent lack of awareness, uncovering entangled dualities, dichotomies and complexities surrounding the ASSI past which hamper investigation and a standard historical narrative. These complications are demonstrated in three main aspects, which effectively act to preclude a unifying ASSI research strategy: divergent valuation methods for data collection; spatial restrictions, for example only focusing on specific Australian areas or Islands of origin; and restricted temporal and thematic paradigms. Added to this are the various avenues of stakeholder interest.

Therefore, the historiography supports the Homer paradox as past historical records, oral histories, and historiographical accounts from various

perspectives, although stemming from a communal event history, sing similar but different versions of the ASSI story. The next section discusses how this paradox of 'song' impacts the legitimization of an encompassing ASSI heritage and articulates with the second 'materiality' paradox within historical archaeology research.

## **2.3 Paradox Two: The Ship of Theseus**

The second paradox affecting ASSI heritage revolves around issues of materiality. The ship of Theseus paradox asks whether a ship with replacement parts can still be considered the same ship with its consequently changed history. This applies similarly to ASSI heritage where the most enduring physical features remaining of their decades of labour are the sugar fields they cleared and sugar mills they tended; but altered, changed, rebuilt over the last 150 years, and even then associated predominantly with colonial expansion and infrastructure. This is further complicated for the ASSI where there is the paucity of other discernible material culture to connect intangible heritage to place. 'Without the material anchor, who can identify the original or reconstructed parts of the intangible?' (Davidson 2015).

### 2.3.1 Material Representation

The theme of representation is further expressed in archaeological research as issues of Islander agency, the use of organic materials and entanglement with colonial infrastructure present major archeological challenges to determining a physical connection or ASSI public memory. As a result only one historical archaeology project has been undertaken to determine ASSI material culture via the cultural landscape, by Lincoln Hayes (2000, 2001, 2002). In the Burdekin area of far north Queensland, located between Townsville and Bowen, Hayes searched for 'physical manifestations of the cultural heritage of Australian South Sea Islanders in northern Queensland' (Hayes 2002:78).



**Figure 2.11: Fairymead Mill, Bundaberg, c 1890 (Queensland State Archives, Image ID 3511)**



Although several ASSI-related sites were identified, such as the original landing places for ships that had been subsequently replaced by modern shipping ports, or historical sugar sites, any ASSI connections to such relevant items of material culture, are generally understood as sugar mill paraphernalia, and labelled as 'industrial' rather than cultural or social memorabilia.

Hayes proved that archaeological information regarding ASSI experience is still possible, with an isolated example of a labour barracks site which remained in the form of an earthen mound (Hayes 2002: 78-79). This site was rich with artefacts of ceramic, bottle glass and animal bones (Hayes 2000:255-257), which can add valuable detail to the ASSI history once it is established in the broader national narrative.

However, it is fair to say that, at this point, such archaeology is too specialised to provide instances of the material culture or public memory of the ASSI indentured labour event. Despite his archaeological success, Hayes' ultimate conclusion was that 'the essence of the Islander's heritage remains in the stories and the memories passed through generations' (Hayes 2002:82).

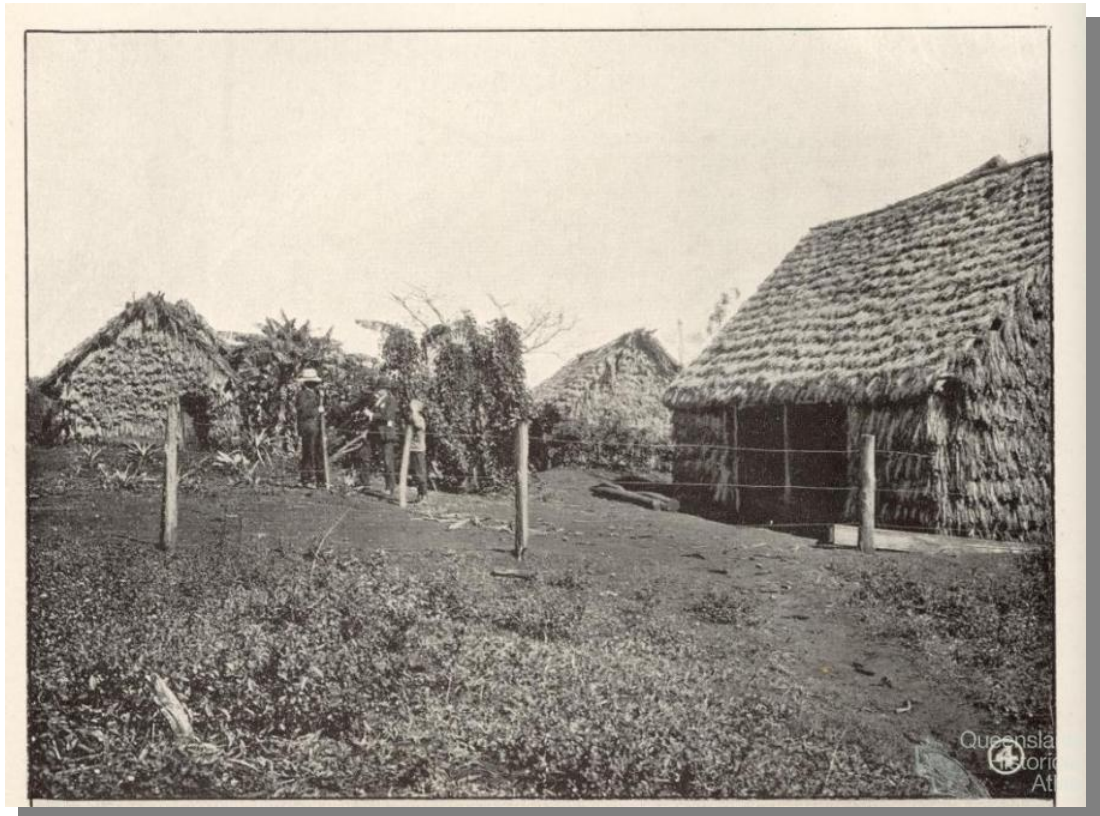
One reason for a dearth of artefacts is that traditionally Pacific Islands societies used organic materials as the mainstay of their material culture. For

example, the use of woven leaves to cook and eat from would not leave durable traces, as opposed to European ceramic utensils. Even ASSI accommodation barracks, which were typically built from light materials, such as timber and corrugated iron, and which were once commonplace throughout the sugar regions, became redundant when the introduction of cane harvesters mechanised the industry. Many were removed, destroyed or simply allowed to deteriorate (Wills 2011:30), effectively removing them from community memory. Added to the use of organic materials are the empty-handed arrivals and compounding issues of consequent liminal and subaltern status, all contributing to an associated lack of personal agency for Islanders in the material world.

These issues are particularly magnified when looking for evidence of ASSI labourers. Firstly, their event time was severely limited, restricted (officially) to the four decades that legislation allowed. As they had no prior settlement in the country evidence from before this period is precluded and substantially reduced afterwards due to enforced repatriations. Secondly, their restricted personal agency as evidenced in the legislation, confined Islander employment to particular levels of agricultural pursuits (for example the South Sea Islander Acts of 1884, 1887, 1913) meaning that they were only able be employed at the lowest end of the income scale, and precluded from land ownership or erecting buildings made of more durable materials.

The situation for ASSI archaeology is summed up eloquently by Moore:

Islander physical presence was much lighter than the bricks, cement, and galvanized iron of the mills, sheds, and houses on the plantations and farms. Their houses were made of materials that have decayed and left evidence only of their hearths and of trees planted to screen them and provide fruit. Their graves are mostly unmarked on the plantations and farms on which they worked, or in the pagan areas of municipal cemeteries. (Moore 2009: 25).



**Figure 2.12: South Sea Islander Huts, Childers 1904 (Queensland Historical Atlas from University of Queensland)**

A further material culture disconnection is that, even where Melanesian artefacts may have survived and appear in museum or private collections,

past collection practices may not indicate a connection to Australian landscape or history, hailing from a time of curiosity collecting. For example, objects in the Adelaide museum's Pacific Islands collection are currently displayed without any accompanying context of collection or providing any spatial or temporal interpretation. This may be in the catalogue entries, so not necessarily absent from the collection entirely, but is certainly not part of the public interpretation.



**Figure 2.13: Pacific Islands Collection Adelaide Museum (Author's photo 16 March 2012)**

### **2.3.2 Entangled / Shared Material Culture**

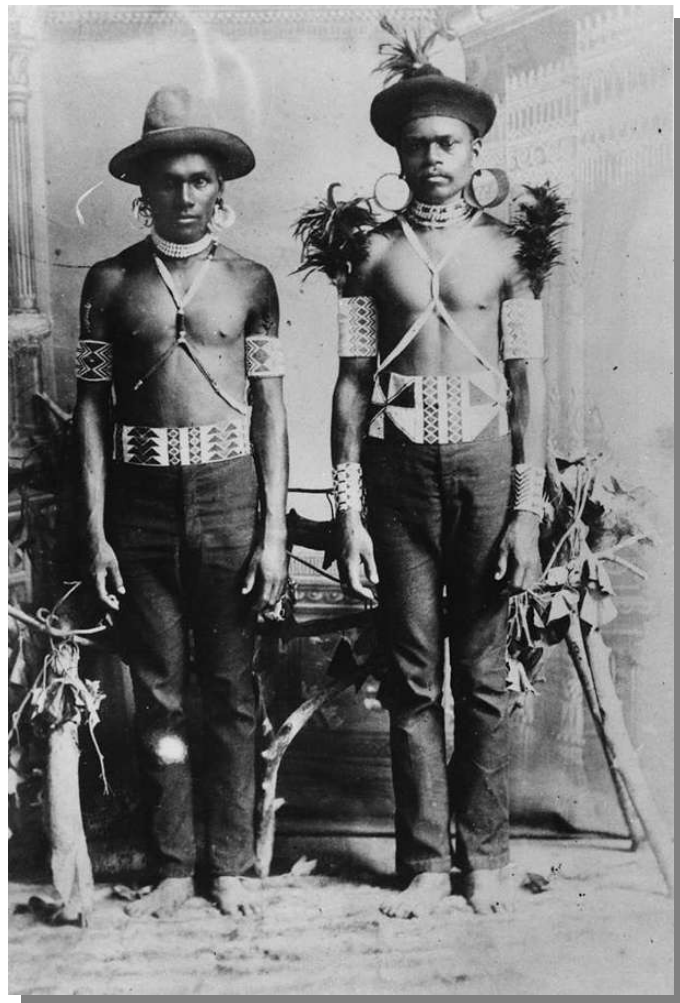
A materials-based ASSI archaeology is further complicated by the necessary use of European-supplied materials and colonial infrastructure within the ASSI labouring population, which resulted in shared or entangled material culture. As with other indigenous research, the particular challenge of ASSI shared material culture extends beyond material presence to 'the entanglement of social relations' and the 'interdependence of Aboriginal and settler Australians' (Harrison 2006:46) that pertains in other industries. For example, Harrison found that artefacts in similar situations are 'so thoroughly "entangled" in both indigenous and settler pastoral station cultures that it would be impossible and foolhardy to attempt to classify them as belonging to one or other culture' (Harrison 2004:141).

The Islanders had, by necessity, to make use of daily items provided by, or available in, their new situations, thus archaeologically interpreting the presence of any given colonial item at a location identifiable as ASSI space is contextual and challenging. To illustrate, the presence of items from a tea service may have been used in a manner akin to a kava (traditional herbal brew of the Pacific Islands) drinking ceremony, rather than as an Islander adoption of the British cultural habit of tea drinking. In this case, although the teacup may be argued to have been 'shared' material culture, as in handled by both cultures, and both were used as drinking vessels for cultural traditions, the histories, ingredients and preparations and ceremonial aspects are markedly different.



As both Harrison (2004) and Silliman (2010) have pointed out for other colonial-Indigenous relationships,

this identification process [of shared or entangled material culture objects] does not capture the diverse, complex, and ambiguous relationships that bound together people, material culture, and space in colonial settings ... and it tends to silence the subordinate histories that co-exist with the dominant ones (Silliman 2010:33).



**Figure 2.14: Islanders in mixed European and Traditional attire, Mackay 1890 (State Library of Queensland, Negative No: 13355)**

Indeed, acknowledging the issue of shared material culture, and interpreting it within both physical and textual histories, is a complex challenge when researching indigenous cultural groups such as the ASSI. Tim Murray, for example, has spent many years exploring the paradox inherent in developing a 'shared' historical narrative of settler-colonial and Indigenous labour (for example Murray 1996, 2004, 2006). Even the terminology 'shared' invites contestation, as it implies degrees of equality and choice. Much as Silliman pointed out regarding serving labourers handling creamware in the American Northeast:

In colonial and capitalist contexts, archaeology confronts not only the erasure of worker production in commodity exchange and market economies, but also the silencing of labourers' uses of already produced objects and spaces (Silliman 2010:42).

This brings up further complications when approaching material artefacts from such a perspective, such as issues of acculturation and assimilation, and may even enter the contested realm of hybrid material culture, 'which is a place of liminality that exists outside of the normal rules of engagement. It is where cultural authority is altered; sign, symbol and significance are disassociated; new meanings are negotiated' (Alt 2006: 289-308).

An illustration of the complexity of deciphering material culture from this period can be seen in Barker and Lamb's 2011 excavation of an ASSI-built stone mound at Ayr, central Queensland. Believed to be a ritual shrine akin to those found in the Solomon Islands, the structure included within its layers a

range of material culture, including glass from a kerosene spirit lamp and flat pieces of iron (Barker and Lamb 2011:71).

In such cases it is the meaning assigned to the objects, rather than their physical pedigree, that provides a framework for interpretation. The glass and iron excavated in a sugar plantation situation alone would not have indicated any ASSI involvement, only of colonial material culture in a work-place site.



### 2.3.3 A Rudderless Ship

It is clear from previous archaeology that establishing a materials-based ASSI heritage via artefacts or cultural landscape presents major challenges. As with the Theseus paradox, 'the discussion has centred principally on the essence of the material "thing" rather than the relationship between it and other things places or people that surround it' (Davidson 2015). For ASSI heritage, even relationships with existing related material 'things' are being obscured by entanglements with colonial provenance, post colonial reuse and industrial interpretations. Where for the ASSI we previously determined via Homer's paradox, that there are many versions of ASSI heritage song, we now find that the ASSI equivalent of Theseus' ship is virtually rudderless, materially fragmented and almost invisible. Perhaps this can be seen as an existing situation where, as 'in most countries that have been the victims of colonialism, [some stakeholders] songs will be the most powerful connection between the material and the people [whereas for] others, whose "songs" do not provide the complement to the material culture, ... attitudes [will] therefore, principally focus on the material' (Davidson 2015).

This highlights a central problem for establishing a landscape-based ASSI heritage and for cultural heritage management: 'how to avoid only considering "what we see" as known and how to use this still hidden knowledge for actual sustainable management of landscape's cultural - historical values' (Bloemers et al 2010:632). Indeed, historical archaeology is in the best position to provide the hidden 'tangible links' of ASSI people with

place that Hayes called for in 2002, able to utilise textual, oral and physical historical evidence traces.

However, Australian archaeology of the ASSI, at this point in time, still faces restrictions to proving the connections to landscape which would be meaningful and accessible to a more general public memory and to enable integration into an extended national narrative. This would be the ideal first step to begin compensation for past cultural erasure, and on which interpretations of cultural relations, artefact analyses and inclusion in historical representations can be built. 'In general, visible historic landscapes are just a small fraction of many more, diverse and older (almost) invisible, but knowable landscapes ... consequently the strategy must be to use the visible to attract interest from policy, practice and the public in order to introduce the potential and fascination of the invisible' (Bloemers et al 2010:632).

In the existing circumstance of multi-vocal songs contrasting with the paucity of discernible ASSI material culture connection to place, this thesis contends that working from the present public memory scape is the link. The thesis research therefore is directed towards understanding existing localised public memory and the legacy of the original colonial labour event in order to establish a connected tangible cultural heritage that opens and supports descendant efforts for recognition. This supports the contention that 'there are multiple, rather than singular, narratives of nation, and the nation is

imagined as much by ordinary people as it is by political elites' (Foster 2002:5 in Kent 2015:3). Only then can connected places of 'history culture', such as artefact scatters, landing places, sugar fields and mills, ASSI museum collections, and other objects and sites, be connected to provide a national narrative of heritage and remembrance for the ASSI (hi)story.



***Figure 2.15: Yasso Point, named in memory of Mackay South Sea Islander couple (Author's photo 9 May 2013)***

It is the contention of this thesis that an investigation of the various physical manifestations of social memory will include and support localised efforts for remembrance. This in no way intends to adopt a colonialist perspective of amalgamating individual differences. Rather, it is the intention to provide a

framework within which the various threads of the ASSI indentured labour story can meet and inform the national narrative. The physical entry point for researching the memory of the ASSI is via commemorative material culture: the enduring memorials that materialise at the intersection of history and memory as well as sit at the central temporal intersection of past, present and future. This also speaks to an archaeology of absence, which considers relationships of social memory and materiality in an archaeological context.

The ongoing dialectic surrounding the recruitment and experiences of the Islander workforce between colonial style textual histories, oral tradition and family histories is represented directly in the memorials erected in the sugar areas. This speaks of 'the centrality to human life of human interactions with materiality' (Davidson 2015:2; Schiffer 1999) and emphasises the importance of the concept of heritage to individual people and communities. For public memory purposes the memorials enable the concept of ASSI heritage to extend beyond the paucity of discernible material culture to anchor aspects of ASSI intangible cultural heritage physically to the landscape. And for the role of archaeology in current issues, this underpins the contention that humans think through things (Hodder 2012:36; Malafouris 2004:58; Pasztory 2005:21) supporting the importance of materiality and therefore archaeological relevance for issues of the contemporary world.

The solution proposed by this thesis to aid the ASSI heritage problem thereby creates spaces that both challenge dominant interpretive narratives and

promote co-existence of conflicting perceptions (Silberman 2008:141) surrounding the ASSI (hi)story.

The material cultural heritage experience is (generally) tied to a location and anchored by the materiality of what people constructed there. In all cases there is a narrative about special events in the past, which generally are of interest primarily to the people whose lives have been affected by (and are the product of) the relevant histories. These narratives are subject to the song of Homer paradox - no two versions of the history are quite the same ... just as the material heritage is subject to the changes of materials described in the ship of Theseus paradox (Davidson 2015:2).

As Davidson (2015) concludes, 'there is no paradox of the ship of Theseus provided there is an attached history that sings about the history of replacement parts.' In the same way, remembrance sites and memorials can be construed as replacement parts of the original event, which, with oral and written histories to sing the ASSI history attached, tie the ASSI presence physically to the landscape by their materiality.

## 2.4 Conclusion

Reviewing ASSI historiography has explained the historic background leading to the current ASSI situation and reinforced their still unfolding consequences as evidenced in the academic literature. This has informed the challenges to an archaeological solution based on discernible material culture and supports the concept of associated memorials as physical extensions to the heritage story.

Of the vast literature about aspects of the ASSI event, a distinct representational shortcoming in the absence of Islander voice is apparent. The several thematic approaches identified in the preceding discussion all support this lack of Islander representation, with quantifiable spatial and temporal themes involving logistics and diaspora implying absent historical placements; qualitative labour history themes of recruitment and workforce mechanisms entangled with colonial industrial concepts; economic themes displaying subaltern tensions resulting in consequent diasporic outcomes and semiotic markers emerging in discourse analysis displaying representational tensions and 'otherness' obvious in the historiography.

Added to this, the interpretive challenges posed by the subtle Islander physical presence on the landscape, plus entanglement issues involved with shared objects and spaces has resulted in erasures of ASSI material culture and restrictions for traditional archaeology. This is demonstrated in the fieldwork of the one significant archaeological study concentrating on defining

actual locations, landscape and dwelling identification for a fraction of the overall target region. Hayes' work showed that archaeology, which centres on the material world and derives data from the physical, tangible evidence of past human activity, can present isolated evidence towards proving tangible connections to place for the ASSI. However, these places are 'subtle traces in the landscape ... such as geographic locations, vegetation and the remembered stories, [and] are not highly obvious to the average onlooker' (Hayes 2002:81).

At present, these places are generally unmarked and do not hold a strong/central place within general public memory of local communities, as they are almost invisible on the cultural landscape. Therefore, although the ASSI contingent workforce shares the history which has become a part of the day to day lives of generations of Australians, continual historiographical and physical adjustments have built on the colonial narrative of European pioneering legacies in post-Federation times, leading to an absence of recognition for the ASSI generally in historical or social memory and has so far defied multi-vocal and material culture-based resolutions. Although these studies show that documental and archaeological traces of the ASSI exist, they are often ephemeral, entangled or isolated, resulting in disjointed and localised outcomes.

The ASSI heritage imbalances and disconnections evident on the current social and cultural landscapes, including physical material culture and



historical representation, are thus echoed in the methods and conclusions of previous research. Two key themes emerge constantly in the literature, however, namely aspects of materiality and the creation of memory, which present as heritage paradoxes. Conversely, incorporating both of these paradoxical aspects supports a possible ASSI heritage solution, when remembrance sites and memorials are considered as material replacement parts of the original event and attached (hi)stories as their memories.

Material culture can be restored, but the intangible songs and stories, of the people who are custodians of the heritage, may be more difficult to recover unless they survive in a material form. It is the interplay of material cultural heritage and the intangible heritage associated with it that is strongest. The changing ship of Theseus can be interpreted best when there is, in the same frame, a song of Homer, however much that too changes (Davidson 2015).

In a similar fashion, the competing ASSI songs and the almost invisible physical connections to the current Queensland landscape are able, by extension, to impact public memory and cultural heritage landscapes, and can best be interpreted via existing memory sites that anchor them to place.

Considering individual physical memory spaces and their attached biographies as components of an assemblage in this way is a departure from existing ASSI research approaches, and will enable the articulation of the various verses and material traces of the Islanders' stories into an inclusive ASSI song, while still allowing space for individual details and expression. This includes space for the previous historiographical and archaeological



studies that have informed various aspects of ASSI past and present historical and socio-economic circumstances.

This approach thus complements previous studies, which identify and explain the ASSI situation and its associated challenges. However they have done so from assorted spatial and theoretical perspectives which add to, rather than alleviate, the social fragmentation and immanent loss of an overall Islander indentured labour story, limiting the strength of an Islander heritage voice in Australia's national narrative.

Chapter 3 organises the specific thematic issues and implications that have been identified into a conceptual analysis with ASSI memorials at the central point of a customised version of integral quadrant theory. It is argued that through this framework memorials can be seen to represent the complexity of the entangled ASSI memory situation and so can be viewed as efforts to relieve the pressure of cognitive dissonance and forgetfulness as people attach a physical value to complex relationships of past and present.

## CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Concepts - Liminal Spaces

**'The creation and/or declaration of sites of memory is nowadays part of a worldwide phenomenon ... [which] encompass a wide array of places, such as historical sites, memorials, monuments, and museums, among others. These places cannot be defined as empty spaces or containers. Therefore, they can only be understood by reference to its materiality; the interaction of structures, things, and people' (Salerno & Zarankin 2015:89).**

### 3.1 Introduction

As this historical archaeology study originates from a present day location on the post-colonial trajectory of the 19th century ASSI indentured labour event, the preceding chapters have focused on past aspects of the ASSI situation to supply historical background and previous research context. This provides the necessary foundation to utilise existing textual sources in order to understand how human behaviours deal with issues of social change that have arisen from methods used in colonial expansion strategies.

As a result of the historical research in chapter 1, several representational issues impacting both material culture and the creation of memory were identified which have led to present day issues of cultural invisibility and historical memory amnesia, concomitant with ongoing disadvantages including disempowerment and inequality as a result of racial discrimination. This information provides some understanding of the current situation and

will provide additional tools for interpreting the memory of the event in the material world.

The loss of Islander voice in Australia's historical narrative was further supported by analysis of previous literature in chapter 2, where it was determined that physical connections to cultural heritage landscapes were so subtle as to be almost invisible to public memory, compounded by complicated fragmentation of Islander and historiographical (hi)stories. The underlying issues of memory and materiality were discussed in the light of ancient heritage paradoxes, leading to the conclusion that the interaction of the tangible and intangible aspects of ASSI heritage are best interpreted through memorials as memory sites, which share accessible and complementary components of materiality and narrative presence.

Chapter 3 now considers the particular thematic implications attached to this proposition, beginning with a brief theoretical overview of memory, sites and memorials, and what this means for archaeological interpretation. Following Staniforth's claim that 'In order to understand meaning, it is essential to be able to ascribe the object's function within its historical and cultural context' (Staniforth 2003:155), a customised model for the analysis of ASSI memorials and memory sites is then presented. This usable and adaptable framework provides a method to organise and discuss the matrix of facets these previous chapters have identified, and that may be embedded in the materiality of the memorials and memory sites. Designed to allow a

systematic analysis focused on their inherent meanings, this model allows the thesis to focus beyond descriptive classifications to address the societal aims of the research.

### **3.2 What Is Memory From An Archaeological Viewpoint?**

In order to interpret ASSI memorials and memory sites, it is necessary first to define memory and its role as understood in this research. The notion of memory and its many forms, styles, manifestations, meanings and interactions with materiality has long attracted academic attention from both historians and archaeologists (for example Halbwachs 1992; Young 1993; Healy 1997; Buchli and Lucas 2001; Alcock 2002; Casey 2004; Campbell 2006; Jones 2007; Connerton 2008; Holtorf 2001, 2012; Olivier 2011; Van Dyke 2011; Hamilakis 2013; Kent 2015; see Olick & Robbins 1998 for a chronological discussion of the foundation concepts). From a traditional archaeological standpoint, 'founded on the epistemology of evidence [which] accepts only claims for which concrete and physical evidence can be presented' (Hamilakis 2013:5), it is the memory strategies of people that are enacted physically in the material world outside of the human brain that provide data through their tangible presence. Meaning is then interpreted through the material culture which presents challenges for subjective qualities such as memory.

Technically, memory strategies are processes that involve storing encoded information for future retrieval, although this can manifest in different ways. For example, ni-Van people pass down oral histories imbricated in intricate designs, Australian Aboriginal people traditionally narrate Dreamtime mythologies, other societies record written testimonies on parchment, and

more recently, computers store information in binary code, encoding records in cyberspace. All memory styles have in common an engagement with temporality and spatiality in the material world (Van Dyke 2011:5). The 'material imprints themselves bear[ing] witness to certain events' (Salerno & Zarankin 2015:94).

This concept supports archaeological ingress because then, as Jones asserts, memory is not merely data stored in the mind, but 'emerges from the mutual engagement between the person and the world', where it mediates between the past and the present, not as a passive reading of external information, but as part of the ongoing process of interpretation and re-interpretation of the world (Jones 2007:27). In Vanuatu, for example, in a similar fashion to sand drawings, ni-Van artist Andrew Tovovur hand-crafts designs (see figure 3.1) containing encoded detailed memories of identity, family history and belonging (pers.comm. by artist A. Tovovur 3rd June 2012).



**Figure 3.1: 'Ceremony with Turtle' by Andrew Tovovur**  
(Author's photo 3 June 2012)

In this way, memory strategies are not static objects, but dynamic interactions of people and materials, and '[m]emory [therefore] needs to be conceived as a process intimately bound to action. It defines the way in which human beings get involved with the past and make sense of it in the present'

(Salerno & Zarankin 2015:92). For Hamilakis, writing of an archaeology of the senses, it is 'the sensory engagement with the material world [that] is a key experiential mode for the generation and activation of bodily memory' (Hamilakis 2013:6). This concept can be extended to include both the emergence of commemorative objects and the end users, or consumers, at memory sites.

For Tovovur, the action of encoding his personal history memories within the design can be understood as an active method of individual 'autobiographic' memory (Halbwachs 1992); of making sense of his own life story in the present. When the attached memory (hi)stories are shared by his communal group, 'it can strengthen the bonds among people who have experienced the same events ... but can get lost when these bonds are not maintained' (Salerno & Zarankin 2015:93). However, should the memory content be passed on more extensively, it 'can also include other people who have no direct experience but who have had the historical memory information transmitted to them' (Salerno & Zarankin 2015:93).

This supports Holtorf's contention that:

The distinction between personal and collective memory is thus not necessarily a sharp one. Both reflect, first and foremost, the conditions of the present in which they originate. Individual persons learn collective memories through socialisation, but they retain the freedom to break out of it and offer alternative views of the past which may themselves later inform the collective memory (Holtorf 2001:612).



Memory therefore, can be fluid and mutable, take different situationally dependant forms and is capable of alterations over time, as ‘the meanings attached to the past will change to fit current circumstances’ (Campbell 2006:102). It is a dynamic engagement between the person and the material world, rather than only ‘a function of the internal processes of the human mind’ (Jones 2007:26). Memory objects, then, emerge from this engagement, as seen at the individual level in the ni-Van art example, and at the communal level in public memorials.



***Figure 3.2: Mossman Canecutters Memorial (Author's photo 1 April 2012)***

For Jones, material culture can be considered as 'potent metaphors for the experience of memory', which 'transform a transient temporal phenomenon into a concrete spatial phenomenon' and 'simultaneously allow people to speak of both personal and collective experiences of memory (Jones 2007:43). He suggests this is due to the physical immediacy that material culture provides, which aligns with Tilley's contention that objects as 'material metaphors have a quality of density in that every aspect of an artefact contributes continuously to its meanings and is interdependently significant' (Jones 2007:43; Tilley 1999:264).

Considering ASSI memorials and memory sites in this way, as 'technologies of remembrance ... provides an insight into the close relationship between the way in which memory is experienced as a personal and social phenomenon' (Jones 2007:44). From this perspective, the transient and almost invisible ASSI event can be understood from multiple view points through the physical dimension of the material culture that are memorials and memory sites.

### **3.3 An Archaeology Of Memory In Time And Place**

Graves-Brown et al. surmise that 'It would seem that one of the most important challenges for the continued formation of the archaeology of the contemporary world – and for archaeology in general [is] – ... to find ways to deal with the past as memory instead of the past as history' (Graves-Brown et al 2013:208). This is particularly relevant to ASSI memorials which, viewed only from an historical perspective, remain as artefacts of the past, whereas their continuing interactions with contemporary people, including archaeologists, in present day cultural landscapes, emphasises the interactive participation of memory with time and space, and indeed, with evolving local and National narratives.

It is through narrative that we can construct linear successions of events; and that we can define a past, a present, and a future. From this standpoint, memory exceeds the association with the past. Narratives are not lists of past events. On the contrary, they are rooted in action (Salerno and Zarankin 2015:95).

Through its attention to materiality, archaeology is considered by some scholars as 'in essence not a form of history but more in line with memory' (Olivier 2011:93; Olsen 2013:209). They theorise that this is due to the materiality of artefacts persisting and enduring through time as objects in the present rather than remaining in the past as historical events, 'thus objecting to the common conception of time (and the past) as the succession of instants ... [therefore] an archaeology of the past necessarily is different from

a history of the past' (Olivier 2011:93; Olsen 2013:208).

This is a critical concept for this thesis, as the basic premise is to connect ASSI memorials and memory sites as contributors of meaning to both the Islander indentured labour past, as well as to the present, which therefore renders memory sites as dynamic points, or 'chronological hybrids' (Olsen 2013:208) along the on-going trajectory of the ASSI event story. In this way, considering ASSI memorials beyond spatial and typological chronologies in the search for their meaning and relationships with people, place, time, materiality and memory, honours both the archaeological object of the present as well as a historical narrative from the past.

Excavating intangible concepts such as meaning and memory from tangible objects presents obvious archaeological challenges. To illustrate, in an attempt to deal with the concept of music as intangible heritage, David Toop proposed a 'hypothetical environment in which intangible multi-sensory events can be experienced as if in a museum...[incorporating] various sounding devices and listening events, all of which are footnoted by ancillary theoretical, conceptual and anecdotal material.' (Toop 2012:39). Working primarily with sound, he found that much of the work he would like to include in exhibitions has no tangible or visible presence and is 'therefore entirely unsuited to environments in which spectators are presumed to linger over exhibits that appear to be static... If there is nothing to see, nothing to touch, then in our current view, there is very little to be done' (Toop 2012:39).

This resonates with the representational challenges facing archaeologists when seeking to link the ASSI event to the contemporary landscape. The paucity of ASSI artefacts and the South Sea Islander's tradition of oral history keeping make it possible to consider the ASSI indentured labour event in this manner; as ephemeral as sound which in effect, without the physical connection to person or place has so far relegated the ASSI event stubbornly in the past.

John Latham however, proposes 'a new way of thinking about the world in which reality is perceived not as solids and intangibles co-existing uneasily in a progression of time but as a world in which all phenomena can be understood through the insistence of events' (Toop 2012: 39). This concept extends the imperceptible phenomena of the colonial indentured labour event into the present, as it continues insisting its existence into the corporeal material world via memorial material culture. This helps us to understand and to recognise the energetic relationship that memory sites have with human memory, time and place, bringing the intangible past into the tangible present; 'materialising memory' as memorials which occupy the liminal space between history and memory.

Memorials then, appear a dominant and enduring physical form of memory, which pass through temporalities of past, present and future. 'Archaeologically, this is most commonly visible in the construction of monuments, which imply a commitment to memory – to interact with the

monuments of the past is to engage in an act of remembrance' (Campbell 2006:102). Representing people, places or events, they are created in efforts to counter the observed transience of human memory, extending the encoding, storage and retrieval memory formulae to the public forum, as people attempt to use physical materials as a means to manipulate their imprints through time and place.

It is these two concepts in particular, the social constructs of time and space that Matthew Campbell considers as the 'two central parameters of memory' (Campbell 2006:102). ASSI memorials and memory sites stake claims to both of these, as representatives of events in time past, while existing always in the present, and attached solidly to place. However, although a study of the physical dimensions of the memorials in situ can provide valuable spatial and typological chronologies, the extended search for relationships with people, place and meanings temporally, including present day interactions, adds other layers of perception, accompanied by extra levels of complexity, which are discussed next.

### **3.4 Unravelling The Memory Matrix - Organising Key Concepts**

In this thesis, memory viewed through the complicated lens of the South Sea Islands indentured labour event, has established themes and concepts surrounding the complex threads of meaning attached to understanding memory and memorials in general. Inspired by Kohn's (2013) anthropological approach to such intricacies, whereby 'complexity, context, and entanglement can themselves become the objects of ethnographic analysis rather than the unquestioned condition for it' (Kohn 2013:14), a model is offered for a conceptual framework from which to reflexively separate and discuss key topic concepts from various alternative perspectives. This framework enables a conversation which includes memorials as the working component of human actions, into this 'conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled' (Latour 2005:44).

In order to achieve this aim, pertinent concepts are grouped into a version of Wilber's four quadrants model of 'integral theory' (Wilber 2008; Salzman 2014), which is designed to be 'comprehensive, inclusive, non-marginalizing, [and] embracing ... integral approaches to any field attempt to be exactly that: to include as many perspectives, styles ... or ways to draw together an already existing number of separate paradigms into an interrelated network of approaches that are mutually enriching' (Wilber 2003:pp.xii-xiii). At a fundamental level phenomena are considered through the four perspectives of psychological, behavioural, cultural and social dynamics.

In this thesis, the model provides a usable organisational method to consider and discuss the interrelated matrix of concepts that surround the material memory of ASSI indentured labour. This enables the separate aspects to be considered individually as well as part of the entire ASSI indentured labour event, where each theme is valid and complimentary. This is critical for a comprehensive understanding of meanings attached to ASSI memory sites, as the event continues to impact present day situations and people with diffuse stakeholder interests. Considered in this way, all historic and contemporary context connected with the ASSI, whether written, oral, experienced or entangled, can be included in the comprehensive archaeological interpretation of the creation and consumption of associated memorials and their physical presence and interactions with communities and cultural landscapes.

The use of a quadrant framework is also adaptable to organise from separate points of enquiry. In this chapter it will be used firstly to reflect on aspects of the historic event itself, as determined from the research in the previous chapters, followed by a thematic breakdown of associated concepts. Both historic and contemporary considerations are relevant to the present day archaeological interpretation of ASSI memory sites, and the framework will be used further in the thesis to consider the results derived from the memorial data.



### **3.5 A Quadrant Framework Of The Historic ASSI Event**

The ASSI indentured labour event occurred because people imagined, instigated and participated, willingly and not, from an array of individual background narratives with an equal array of consequent experiences. The plethora of historiography that has been written about the historical aspects of the ASSI indentured labour event has in most part been studied with an empirical historical focus, dealing with various aspects of the event and its impacts on people. However, both the subjects and the writers of historiography, through their participation, experiences and choices, have brought with them subjective perceptions, thoughts, emotions and memories from a variety of personal backgrounds and motivational agendas. These perspectives, wittingly or not, pervade and shape research, or are lost and hidden in history, by the specific methodological approaches used to access and study the event. Hamilakis points this out in terms of archaeology:

“New archaeology” discourses dealt with environment, subsistence, and techno-economic issues, ... post-processual approaches refocused attention on contextual meanings, but the representationist paradigm remained dominant ... the linguistic turn [saw] the past ... as text that can be read ... and the recent wave of phenomenological accounts has redirected attention towards the human body (Hamilakis 2013:7).

Archaeological studies of human senses and memory share interesting and inseparable parallels, especially as material data for both are ‘embedded in

matter [which] has left plenty of material evidential traces' (Hamilakis 2013:5-6). Indeed, an archaeological interpretation of ASSI memorials and memory sites typifies the concept that 'the work of memory relies on the senses, and the senses rely on the materiality and the physicality of the world' (Hamilakis 2013:7). By extension, this includes all people who consequently interact with memory objects and sites, as 'the senses are materiality's way of producing remembering and forgetting' (Hamilakis 2013:7). In this thesis the senses are understood as human interactions with memory sites.

With this in mind, research of the memory of the ASSI event must include the original circumstances surrounding it - that is, against a backdrop of colonial culture, with a struggling, young sugar industry based on the labour intensive plantation model (Irvine 2004:2). Previously throughout the British Empire, until the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, colonial plantations had relied on slave labour to supply their workforce. The Pacific 'indentured' labour system provided a legal framework for a similar system to arise in Australia from the 1860s which, '[r]egardless of definitions of illegality, [implies that] all of the Islanders were 'culturally kidnapped', meaning that Europeans took cultural advantage of their small-scale societies and enticed Islanders to come to Australia under circumstances they did not understand (Moore 1985: 47-48). This cultural juxtaposition of human expectation and experience is important to be aware of, as differing worldviews, experiences and memory strategies will require recognition in the interpretations of memory sites. An overview of the particular aspects surrounding the ASSI event are grouped in figure 3.3.

| Quadrant 1<br>'I'  | Quadrant 2<br>'IT'   |
|--|--|
| <b>PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS (MENTAL)</b><br><b>THE IDEA OF SSI INDENTURED LABOUR</b><br><br>Intentional aspects<br>European expectations<br><br>Experiential aspects<br>ni-Van experiences<br><br>Sources: Historiography<br>Historical discourse       | <b>PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECTS (MATERIAL)</b><br><b>ENACTED AGENCY PUT INTO PRACTICE</b><br><br>Behavioural phenomena<br>Recruitment practices - ships, diaspora<br>Plantation organisation - barracks, industry<br><br>Empirical evidence<br>Texts - Newspapers, correspondence<br>- Government Acts<br>- Photographs<br><br>Sources: Archaeology - excavations<br>Material culture - artefacts |
| Quadrant 3<br>'WE'   | Quadrant 4<br>'ITS'  |
| <b>CULTURAL CONTEXT (PHILOSOPHICAL)</b><br><b>COMMUNITY VIEWPOINTS</b><br><br>Philosophical constructs<br>Colonial theories - race, expansion<br><br>Ethical concepts<br>Religion, slavery<br><br>Sources: Conceptual discourse<br>Academic analysis | <b>SOCIAL DYNAMICS (SYSTEMIC)</b><br><b>NETWORK PHENOMENA</b><br><br>Ecological influences<br>Environmental interactions<br><br>Economical factors<br>Political acts<br><br>Sources: Landscape archaeology<br>Government records   |

**Figure 3.3: Integral grouping of aspects surrounding the ASSI labour event (past)**

The quadrant framework provides the space to consider and enable discourse on the event from all perspectives, with the left side of the quadrant reflecting a subjective and interior focus, while the right side is an objective and exterior focus. Furthermore, the upper half is concerned with individual experiences (upper left) and material expression (upper right), while the lower half includes shared meanings and social relationships, all of which have bearing on the material existence of memorials and memory sites.

For the purposes of this study, an integral view of the ASSI indentured labour episode places connected historiography in the upper left (quadrant 1), which is the interior, subjective, emic quadrant; it is concerned with intangible, invisible, states of mind, self identity and immediate sensations. This is the 'I' quadrant and deals with experiential aspects of the event sourced from the historiography discussed in 'The song of Homer' (chapter 2).

The upper right quadrant 2, according to integral theory, is the exterior, objective, etic quadrant, which deals with the material, visible and observable: those things that exist in time and space. This is the 'It' quadrant and deals with how the ASSI event was enacted in material infrastructure. This quadrant is concerned with evidence and historical memory of the event that is tangible, as discussed in 'The ship of Theseus' (chapter 2). In this case, it is concerned with all material evidences that are enacted in the physical world with material objects.

Conceptual theories attached to the ASSI indentured labour event take their place in the lower left (quadrant 3), of inter-subjective, collective, interior experiences. This is the 'We' quadrant and in the case of the original event includes shared understandings of world views, communal language, and ethical concepts such as colonial philosophical constructs of racial superiority trumping ni-Van adherence to Kastom, family and religious beliefs. These also have been introduced in chapter 1.

The lower right (quadrant 4) is the exterior, collective, inter-objective quadrant of 'Its'. Systems and networks, technology, government and the natural environment sit in this quadrant, some of which have been touched on in the proceeding two chapters. The social co-operation involved in creating the vast colonial sugar plantation landscapes including financial, political and labour networks to interact and subdue the environmental challenges of such large scale endeavours, are examples of these.

Organising the complex system of interrelated themes surrounding archaeological enquiry into the ASSI indentured labour event in this way provides a means to conceptualise and bring into conversation the relationships between complicated avenues of cause and effect that the various aspects of agency and hypothesis have created or identified. This enables ways to think about and design an archaeological course of study and opens the way for academic discourse surrounding ASSI memorials and memory sites.

This framework is particularly relevant for designing and interpreting historical archaeology research projects, which can often focus, as in this case, on present day issues with intangible, experiential components, or perhaps derive from a community, activist perspective. In this way it is possible to identify and consider multiple aspects connected to an event, place or object, which take into account viewpoints from all stakeholders, and use all sources of information.

### 3.6 A Quadrant Framework Of Ensuing ASSI Event Concepts

Remaining with the framework, but extending the focus from the close up consideration of the original event and people involved at that point in time to a focus on ensuing concepts attached to the event, opens a new dialogue which includes the whole dynamic event trajectory from instigation to present. This is shown in the following figure 3.4.

| Quadrant 1: Interior - Experiential  | Quadrant 2: Exterior - Empirical   |
|--|--|
| <b>ASSI HISTORICAL SOURCES - HUMANS</b><br><br>Indentured labour<br><br>Diaspora<br><br>Subaltern<br><br>Liminality<br><br>Transience<br><br>EMBEDDED<br><b>HISTORICAL MEMORY</b>            | <b>ASSI ARCHAEOLOGY - OBJECTS</b><br><br>Labour heritage<br><br>Landscape legacy<br><br>Industrial heritage<br><br>Shared / entanglement<br><br>Multivocality<br><br>ENTANGLED<br><b>HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY MEMORY</b> |
| Quadrant 3: Interpersonal - Philosophical  | Quadrant 4: Interobjective - Social  |
| <b>ARCHAEOLOGY/ MEMORY THEORIES</b><br><br>Meanings<br><br>Memory studies<br><br>Intangibility<br><br>Contemporary relevance<br><br>Reflexivity<br><br>SYMMETRICAL<br><b>MEMORY THEORIES</b> | <b>MEMORIALS - MEMORY PRACTICES</b><br><br>Temporality<br><br>Spatiality<br><br>Materialised memory<br><br>National narrative<br><br>Heritage<br><br>NETWORKED<br><b>SOCIAL MEMORY</b>                                 |

**Figure 3.4: Integral grouping of attached themes determined from literatures (present)**

Using this grid to design or interpret an archaeology of the ASSI from a linear progression of materials-based archaeology would, in this case, begin with what is commonly accepted to have happened at the particular time or place (Quadrant 1). This would then identify or prompt the search for specific artefacts as arising from the event, such as 'unintentional' remains, entangled or material residues of the human experience of the event (Quadrant 2). These are then further theorised as part of the infrastructure, or basic physical organisation of a society, and may then be used to produce, or support a theory (Quadrant 3) about the meaning of the artefact and its place in the cultural structure of the society. The role of the said material culture can then be further interpreted within the society's extended social system, or super-structure (Quadrant 4). This approach works from the tangible material artefact, placing it and its physical presence at the centre of the quadrant, to extrapolate inherent meaning about the artefact's creation and possible theories about its emergence, function, role and meaning.

Due to the paucity of specific ASSI material culture, the object-based approach is not applicable in this case. As discussed in the previous chapters, archaeological survey and excavation have had limited success to date (Hayes 2000, 2001, 2002) due to the distances and colonial entanglements of the multiple sites and built heritage connected with the ASSI labour event. However, if in lieu of original discernible ASSI material culture, memory of the actual labour event is placed at the centre of the quadrant, it is possible to begin a tangible connection to the event through

the memory strategies that have resulted in commemorative material culture at public places, and to extrapolate meaning from what is present on the memorial and relict sugar landscapes, as well as what is not present in the material sense.

By considering memory of the ASSI in this way, the historiographical knowledge we have in Quadrant one is considered, along with the physical presence, or lack thereof, of memorials and other built heritage that can be connected to the ASSI event as memory artefacts from Quadrant 2. Archaeological theories in Quadrant 3 can then be applied, for example about the physical construction, design, and agency, as a physical component in the intangible experience of human memory. Quadrant 4 is then in the position to interpret memory sites for inherent socio-cultural meaning such as spatiality, relevance to local and extended communities, temporality, function in both past and present, and for its role in extended networks of public memory.

However, other quadrant relationships apart from the described linear progression become apparent and easily accessible when the whole ASSI situation is considered from this quadrant perspective. For example, certain 'dichotomies inherent in the archaeological enterprise since its inception, such as mind versus body, subject vs object, science vs nature, and theory versus practice' (Hamilakis 2013:10) are at once obvious and able to become part of the conversation without weakening analysis. These are discussed next.



### 3.6.1 Relationships Between Quadrants 1 and 2

| Quadrant 1: Interior - Experiential     | Quadrant 2: Exterior - Empirical                   |
|---|--|
| <b>ASSI HISTORICAL SOURCES - HUMANS</b> | <b>ASSI ARCHAEOLOGY - OBJECTS</b>                  |
| Indentured Labour                       | Labour Heritage                                    |
| Diaspora                                | Landscape Legacy                                   |
| Subaltern                               | Industrial Heritage                                |
| Liminality                              | Shared / Entanglement                              |
| Transience                              | Multivocality                                      |
| <b>EMBEDDED<br/>HISTORICAL MEMORY</b>   | <b>ENTANGLED<br/>HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY MEMORY</b> |

**Figure 3.5: Quadrant 1 - Quadrant 2**

A consideration of the the relationships between the top two quadrants presents a series of dichotomies that differ and contradict each other, supporting themes discussed in chapter 2. First and most obvious, is that the experiences, identity, and memories of the individuals involved in the ASSI labour event, as represented in quadrant one, could be expected to be reflected in the physical, material culture archaeology represented in quadrant 2.

However, the legacy remaining on the industrial heritage landscape in the present is not discernibly reflecting the presence of the key providers of labour in the past. The keywords listed in quadrant one indicate that this situation is heavily influenced by the transient, liminal, subaltern nature of the indentured labour diaspora, stemming back to its creation in the colonial past.

This echoes other dichotomies present in the historiography, such as the contradicting concepts of an ASSI indentured labour diaspora on one hand, and corroboration of black-birding and slavery correlates, on the other. Another contrast is that of the lack of recognition of Islanders' contributions to Australia's nation building efforts. The same workforce that powered the growth of the sugar industry remains a subaltern status in the very society they laboured to create.

These inconsistencies indicate that representational issues from the past continue into the present, with landscape and heritage standing for colonial industrial triumphs without the opportunity for a multi-vocal representation. The historical memory of human development in the landscape reflects objective, colonial themes at the cost of the subjective, experience of Melanesian labourers.

Indeed, '[c]olonial contexts produce culture and history as much as they destroy' (Silliman 2010). It appears that European colonisation and macro-scale global processes of settler colonialism subsume the very workforce that powered nation building efforts. The over-riding theme of this quadrant relationship is that contemporary ASSI social identity and historical memory are entrenched in the enduring colonial characterisations of the past.

### 3.6.2 Relationships Between Quadrants 3 and 4

| Quadrant 3: Interpersonal - Philosophic   | Quadrant 4: Interobjective - Social Concepts   |
|---|--|
| <b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORIES</b><br><br>Meanings<br>Memory Studies<br>Intangibility<br>Contemporary Relevance<br>Reflexivity<br><br><p style="text-align: center;"><b>SYMMETRICAL<br/>MEMORY THEORIES</b></p> | <b>MEMORIALS - MEMORY PRACTICES</b><br><br>Temporality<br>Spatiality<br>Materialised Memory<br>National Narrative<br>Heritage<br><br><p style="text-align: center;"><b>NETWORKED<br/>SOCIAL MEMORY</b></p> |

**Figure 3.6: Quadrant 3 - Quadrant 4**

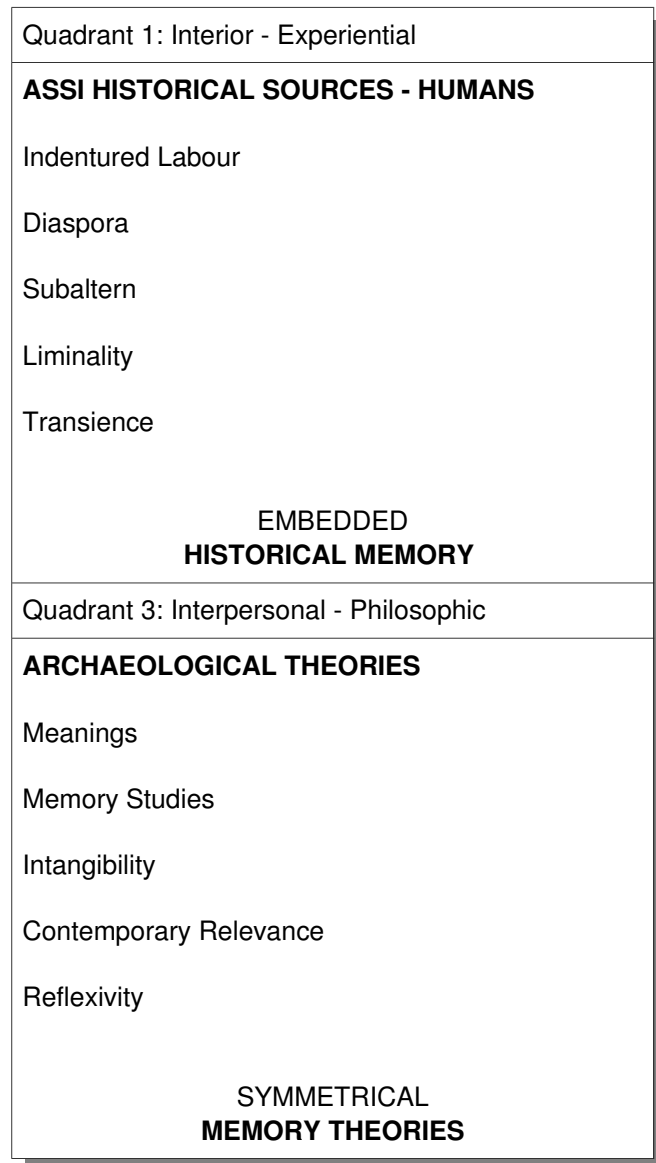
The lower, collective quadrants present a more complementary relationship, where post-colonial understandings of what happened provide interpretive tools reflected in archaeological concepts and sociocultural themes. Relationships between intangible aspects of past happenings and current conceptual and physical representational discourse become available presenting binaries, that complement each other. Here, archaeology applies conceptual values, meanings and cultural backgrounds to interpret artefacts, systems and networks of social memory.

The liminal, transitional identity of the ASSI can be identified and become a

part of a shared Australian national identity as historical archaeology points out relationships of memory and materiality. Omission from the national narrative supported by descendant groups organising celebrations of their dissonant Australian heritage can be discussed and enabled within these two quadrants. The transient, temporary ASSI position can then be empowered by the creation of a legacy of place, community and memory.

‘Persistent structural inequalities originat[ing] from the colonial experience’ (Lydon & Rizvi 2010:17) can be addressed as Australian micro scale processes bringing local histories and specifics into play. Where the top two quadrants deal predominantly with ASSI representations from the past, the over-riding theme of the lower quadrant is concerned with the interplay of that past and the present.

### 3.6.3 Relationships Between Quadrants 1 and 3



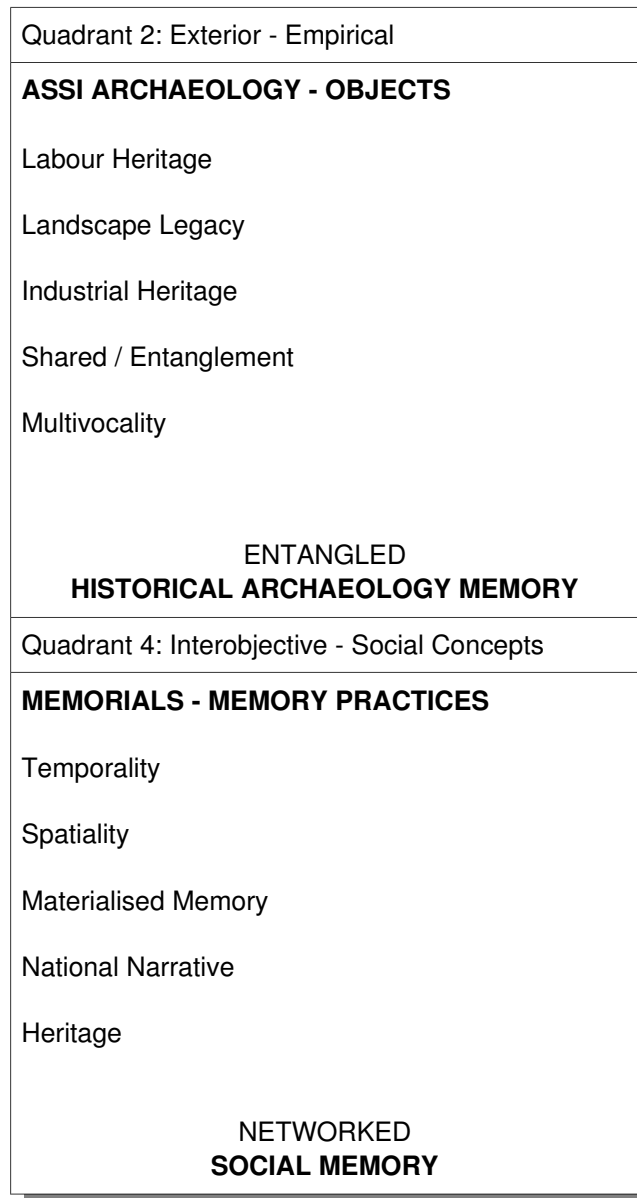
**Figure 3.7: Quadrant 1 - Quadrant 3**

Turning attention to the left, or interior side, issues surrounding what can be seen as the intangible, experiential aspects of the Indentured labour event can be discussed using the collective conceptual language of archaeological

theories. Here the subjective 'I' of the actual past experience, what individuals actually experienced and how this has materialised, or not, becomes the subject of memory studies and contemporary relevance in the domain of the intersubjective 'we' of archaeological theory.

Again, past and present meet in this quadrant relationship, as ASSI social identity and cultural heritage trajectories take their place in considerations of archaeological memory. 'Like the act of painting, the archaeological act thus becomes an engagement with the present's surface: the mediation of the past as a creative engagement with the present and future (Harrison 2011:160). The over-riding theme of the left quadrants is archaeological access to intangible cultural heritage of the more recent past and what bearing this may have on the present and future.

### 3.6.4 Relationships Between Quadrants 2 and 4



**Figure 3.8: Quadrant 2 - Quadrant 4**

The exterior side, quadrants two and four, are concerned with the ‘tangible’ elements of the ASSI indentured labour event, that is, the material remains of the event. The relationship of these quadrants shows that the objective ‘It’, quadrant 2, that reflects the paucity of ASSI material culture, can be balanced

by the inter-objective 'It's' of quadrant 4, with intentional material culture in the form of commemorative materialisation of the missing memory of the event.

This suggests that a lack of ASSI representation in the industrial heritage landscape may be mitigated by attention to site specific memorials prompting social memory of the Islanders and the event. 'Australians' sense of identity and the past, forming a particular kind of link between individuals and the collective narratives constituted by road-side installations, monuments, [and] signs [is] a discourse joining tangible, textual, visual and embodied experiences of place' (Lydon 2005a:110). The over-riding theme of the right quadrants' relationship is the dynamic interplay of archaeology, that is material culture, with public memory.



### 3.6.7 Relationships Between Quadrants 2 and 3

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | Quadrant 2: Exterior - Empirical   |
|   | <b>ASSI ARCHAEOLOGY - OBJECTS</b><br><br>Labour Heritage<br><br>Landscape Legacy<br><br>Industrial Heritage<br><br>Shared / Entanglement<br><br>Multivocality<br><br><br>ENTANGLED<br><b>HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY MEMORY</b> |
| Quadrant 3: Interpersonal - Philosophic   |  |
| <b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORIES</b><br><br>Meanings<br><br>Memory Studies<br><br>Intangibility<br><br>Contemporary Relevance<br><br>Reflexivity<br><br><br>SYMMETRICAL<br><b>MEMORY THEORIES</b> |  |

**Figure 3.9: Quadrant 2 - Quadrant 3**

Looking diagonally across at the relationships between quadrants 2 and 3, we can now apply archaeological methods and theories to the physical landscape and discern meanings in the very lack of discernible ASSI material

culture. When collective, post-colonial conceptions are applied to issues of colonial lack of physical representation, the tension created in the classic presence-absence dichotomy is resolved.

ASSI archaeology is no longer reliant on an object-oriented approach to materiality when archaeological analytic distinctions such as practical functions and social analysis are applied. The ASSI event, when considered not only by what is present on the material record, but also by what is absent from it, informs of colonial actions that continue to impact present communities: 'a material lifeworld that is conceived and constructed by us, yet equally shaping of human practice in daily praxis' (Meskell 2005:3).

The intangible memory of the ASSI on the contemporary landscape also comes into focus with the reflexive application of archaeological interpretation. For example, remnant dry stone walls that marked sugar cane field boundaries in a colonial settler grid pattern now reflect the painstaking attention to detail of the ASSI labourers.

### 3.6.8 Relationships Between Quadrants 1 and 4

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Quadrant 1: Interior - Experiential<br><br><b>ASSI HISTORICAL SOURCES - HUMANS</b><br><br>Indentured Labour<br><br>Diaspora<br><br>Subaltern<br><br>Liminality<br><br>Transience<br><br><br>EMBEDDED<br><b>HISTORICAL MEMORY</b> |  |
|  | Quadrant 4: Interobjective - Social Concepts<br><br><b>MEMORIALS - MEMORY PRACTICES</b><br><br>Temporality<br><br>Spatiality<br><br>Materialised Memory<br><br>National Narrative<br><br>Heritage<br><br><br>NETWORKED<br><b>SOCIAL MEMORY</b> |

**Figure 3.10: Quadrant 1 - Quadrant 4**

Looking diagonally across at the relationships between quadrants 1 and 4, we see that the actual experiences of the indentured labourers can have a direct relationship with the public memory of the event as reflected in the

creation of related commemorative material culture. By viewing memorials as materialised memory, an ASSI heritage can emerge across temporal and spatial parameters, resolving the second binary presence-absence dichotomy between quadrants two and four, that of lack of social memory of the ASSI.

### **3.6.9 Overall Relationship Of Quadrants**

Viewing all four quadrants in a linear fashion, we see that the unrepresented social identity and concomitant lack of agency of the South Sea Islands labourers as noted in quadrant one, leads to, and is entangled in, the lack of specific historical memory represented in quadrant 2. This can be addressed and interpreted through the application of the archaeological theories in quadrant 3, applied to representations of social memory contained in commemorative monuments as in quadrant 4, which have emerged as solutions to relieve the representational tensions caused by a paucity of both material and historical memory. In this way, memorials can be seen as 'comprising numerous relationships in a network that led to their existence ... with multiple lines connecting them to specific historical events, places, other materials, other objects, theories, people etc. - all of which were necessary for the object's characterization' (Martin 2013:7).

### **3.7 Conclusion - ASSI Memory Sites**

This chapter has introduced the concept of memorials as ‘memory materialised’, emerging from the dynamic engagement between person and the material world, and as occupants of the liminal space between history and memory as people use material things to remember with. Through the physical immediacy of their material culture fabric, the energetic relationship that memory sites have with human memory, time and place is discussed. In this way ASSI-related memory sites are seen to insist the existence of past events into present day interactions; in effect, bringing the intangible past into the tangible present. Building on the previous background and context chapters, conceptual placements within a customised framework are suggested, leading to the discussion of conceptual relationships to further support the thesis premise and structure.

By considering memorials from the present perspective rather than as artefacts of the past, we are able to think critically about their ‘ontological status as persistent traces of the ASSI event. The interpretive chapters which follow the methodology and data presentation in chapter 4 will draw from the quadrant concepts discussed in this chapter, investigating ASSI memorials for:

- Embedded historical memory as outlined in Quadrant 1
- Entangled formation processes based on discrete material (hi)stories as seen in Quadrant 2

- Semiotic references from the past and relevance as an assemblage as discussed in Quadrant 3
- Agency in networks of social memory and meaning as in Quadrant 4.

## **CHAPTER 4: The Memory Practices - Material Constructs**

**'[A]n archaeology in and of the present should not be limited to those things which have been abandoned, ceased, closed down or been discarded, but should also be concerned with the study of contemporary objects and places which are still in operation, which are themselves still actively operating and form part of the assemblage on the surface of the world' (Harrison and Schofield 2011:12).**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The thesis so far highlights the role of historical archaeological research of ASSI-related memory sites as a counter to the perceived social amnesia of Islander heritage in Australia. The chapters work loosely through the first three quadrants of the demonstrated conceptual framework. By this design the complexity of ways in which people have experienced and attempted to process the reality and memory of the ASSI event are available for discussion without collapsing these variants into one overarching perspective. The framework simultaneously identifies and reduces inter-related perspectives of the event's history, and culminates in the contextual section of this thesis.

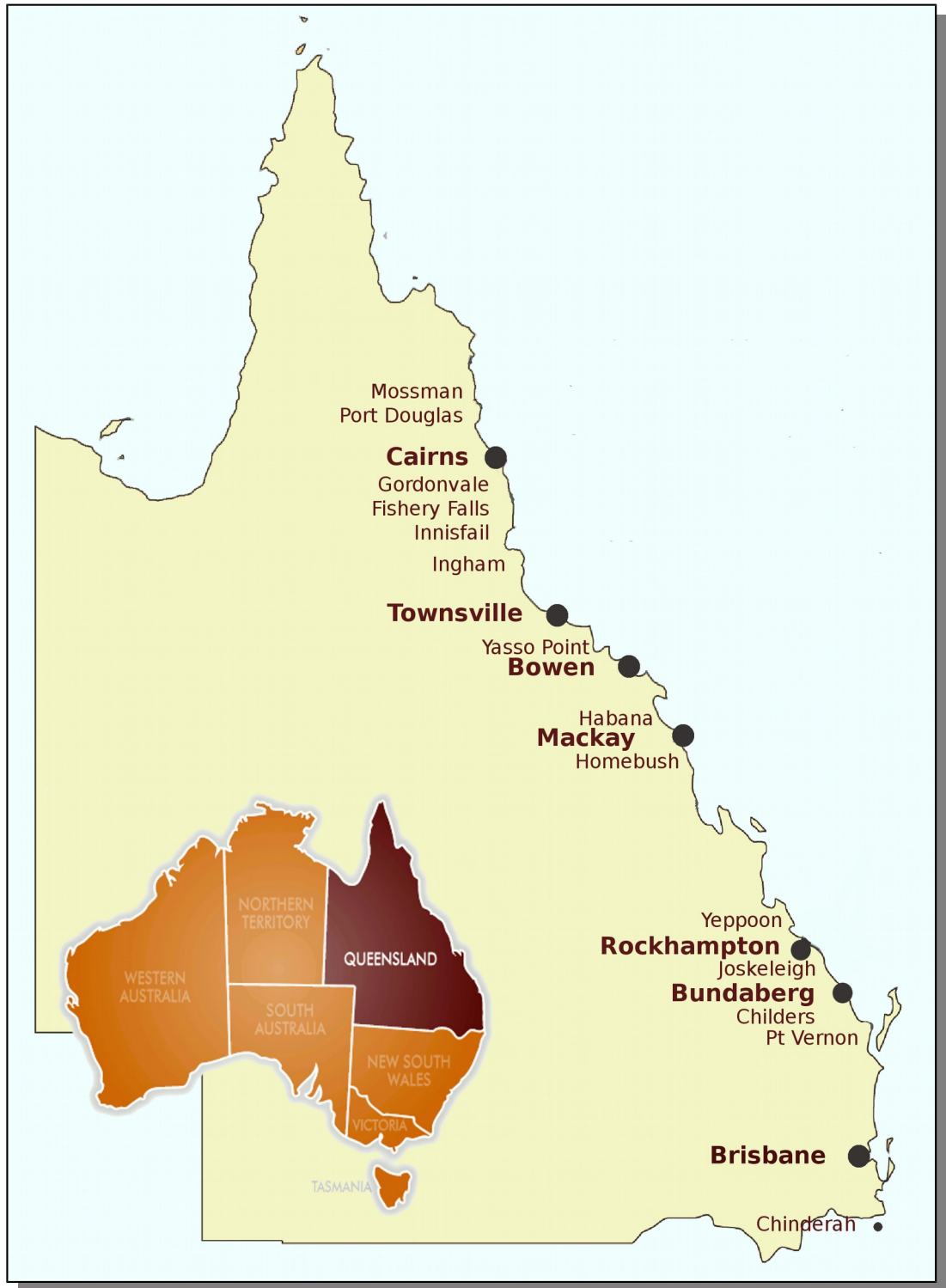
To this end, the relational aspects of the experienced historical memory of the ASSI labour event are outlined in chapter 1, the entangled empirical



archaeological memory of the event is discussed in chapter 2 and the philosophical theoretical meanings applied to understanding the entire event trajectory are presented in chapter 3. The quadrant framework of chapter 3 enables easy access for considering the conceptual aspects of the monument data and also frees interpretive positions from fixed spatial or temporal parameters. This allows consideration of ASSI memory from various concurrent reflexive positions, supports the individual memory sites in the contemporary Queensland landscape, and provides a framework for understanding them as they together make up the thesis data assemblage.

Chapter 4 now presents the thesis data, thus addressing the fourth quadrant of networked social practices that have resulted in the creation of ASSI-related memory sites as material expressions of the past. An explanation of the thesis methodology is followed by the thematic categorisation of the physical attributes of the memory sites as the primary basis for organising and reporting the results. A summary of the data through graphical representations of category variables, including geographical, temporal and functional parameters, concludes the following section.

## 4.2 ASSI-Related Memory Sites

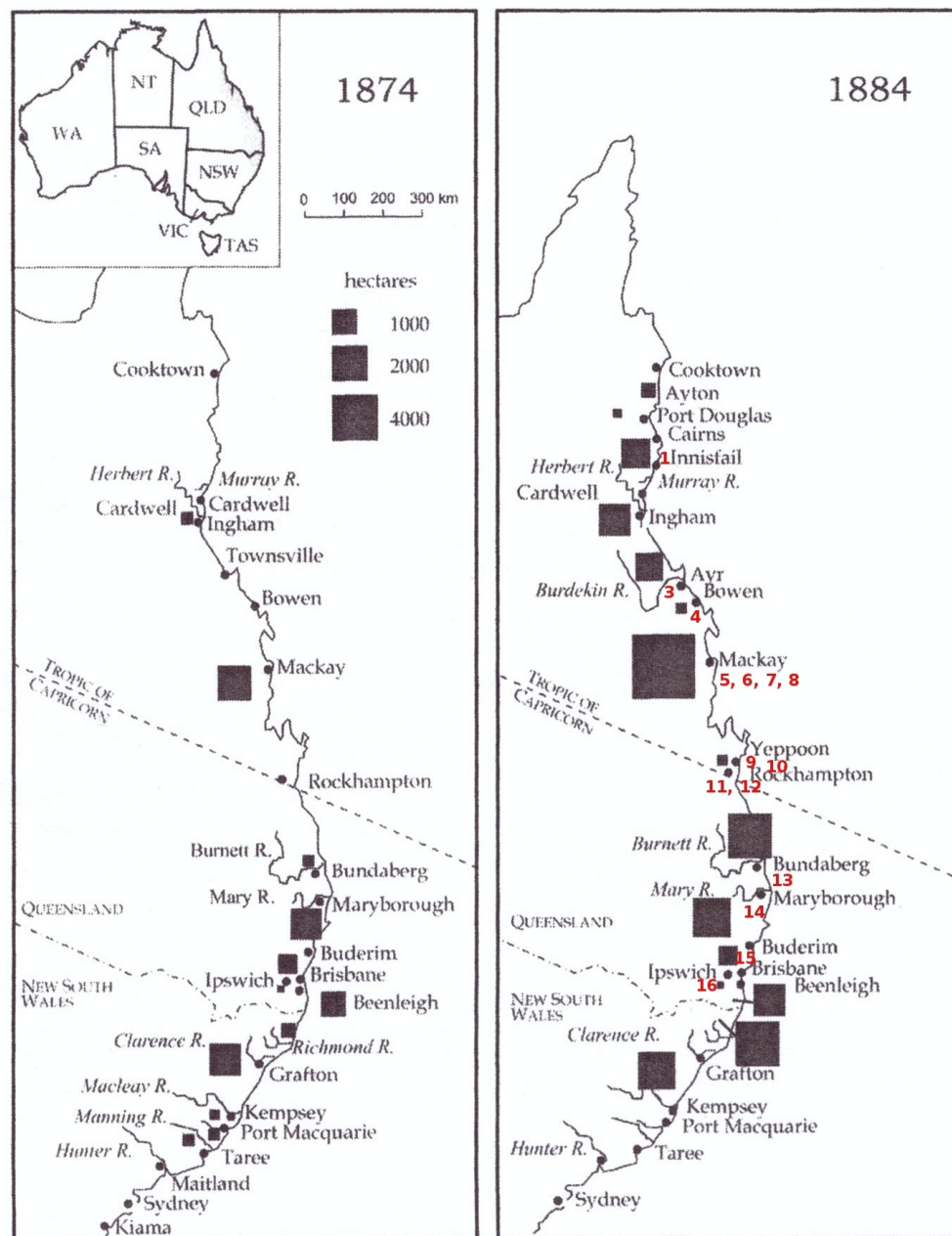


**Figure 4.1: Locations of thesis ASSI memory sites (detailed in Table 4.3)**

### **4.2.1 Research Area**

As this study concerns a post-colonial situation that includes present day trajectories, the research area is determined by the locations of the sugar growing areas in which the ASSI labour event took place. The entire sugar cultivation area covers three thousand kilometres, comprising two thousand kilometres of far north Queensland and another thousand kilometres of northern New South Wales. However, the research area presented in this thesis is confined, for the most part, to Queensland's borders because sugar production here was initially based on the established global production model of plantations, which used imported field workers, including South Sea Islanders. The dominant New South Wales model used European farm workers on smaller farms (Griggs 2013:39).

The extent of this two thousand kilometre area is necessarily dictated by the colonial sugar industry expansion and therefore also by the extent of the physical distances separating the original plantations to which workers were brought. Figure 4.2 shows these locations to coincide with currently active ASSI descendant groups which are also directly relational to the historic 19th century sugar farms to which their ancestors were transported (figure 2.6).



*Distribution of sugar cane cultivation in Australia, 1874 and 1884.*

Source: Based upon figures in the *Statistics of the Colony of Queensland, 1874 and 1884*, and the *Statistical Registers of New South Wales, 1874 and 1884*.

**Figure 4.2: ASSI Descendant Groups (in red – see key below) set against historic Australian sugar cane cultivation areas of 1874 and 1884 (Griggs 2011:47)**

**Key to ASSI Organisations shown on Figure 4.2**

1. Innisfail Jubilee Community Housing Assoc. Inc.
2. Mount Isa South Sea Islander Community
3. Burdekin Australian South Sea Islander Organisation Inc. Ayr
4. Whitsunday Australian South Sea Islander United Community-Bowen and Proserpine Branch
5. Australian South Sea Islander Arts and Cultural Development Organisation, North Mackay
6. Mackay South Sea Islanders Community Funeral Fund
7. Mackay & District Australian South Sea Islander Assoc. Inc.
8. Australian South Sea Islander United Council-Mackay Branch
9. Australian South Sea Islander Movement, Keppel Sands
10. Joskeleigh Community Association Inc.
11. Rockhampton Australian South Sea Islander Community Inc.
12. Australian South Sea Islanders United Council & District, Rockhampton
13. Bundaberg and District South Sea Islanders Action Group
14. Australian South Sea Islander Fraser Coast Cultural Heritage Research Project, Dundowran
15. Descendants of the ASSI Association Inc. Bli Bli
16. Australian South Sea Islanders Secretariat Inc. Woolloongabba

The positioning of present day descendant groups supports the longevity and connections to place of ASSI communities. The clustering of descendant groups around the larger historical cultivation areas indicates a pattern of spatial concentration by the ASSI, with a tendency to remain near original labouring areas. This positioning has added the complication of fracturing the ASSI community into segmented localities, each evolving independently and with sugar towns and creating localised descendant groups. This facilitates the examination of the role of memory sites in the construction of social memory at these locations via the mapping of these sites onto spatial and chronological realities.

In order to collate the associated memory sites data, this thesis views the ASSI indentured labour 'event' as an archaeological aspect of Australian settler history and understands the entire Queensland sugar growing area as 'the site'. This allows an assemblage of individual memory sites and commemorative structures to be considered as site features, as opposed to artefacts merely belonging to it, in that they cannot be separated from their location without changing their integral form. This, in effect, positions the ASSI event physically on the landscape, supporting a chronological connection and sense of heritage for descendant and contemporary local communities, which can inform an inclusive shared history and expand the narrative of life in Queensland. Also, by viewing the ASSI-related memory sites as an archaeological assemblage in this way, the data of the separate memorials can be considered together, which may uncover patterns or

relationships that, though not intrinsically coherent, may be linked through material or semiotic networks of meaning.

Further, as this research concerns a contemporary situation, it is fitting to take seriously Harrison's (2011) suggestion to articulate the object of archaeological study as the surface assemblage and thereby to address an archaeology 'of and in the present' (Harrison 2011:14). Harrison claims that 'to study surface assemblages in the present means to recognise the agency of humans, non-humans and the collectives themselves as charged with latent potential, as generative of new pasts and futures in the present' (Harrison 2011:12). Although possibly an 'assembled' assemblage of memorials spread across such a large area may not be quite what Harrison had in mind, the sentiment certainly resonates with the aims of this thesis. This is not to challenge the dominant trope of archaeology as excavation but rather to pay attention to the relationships between objects in our contemporary world and the past. A motivating factor for this research is to provide a physical framework within which existing and future archaeological excavated materials can be attached as dynamic facets of the ASSI labour event.

### 4.2.2 Selection of Sites

As a principal aim of this thesis is to investigate the meaning and role of public memory sites related to the ASSI, it is crucial to create an independent database from a perspective outside of any contemporary perception of stakeholder bias. To achieve this, three methods of collection were employed to ensure that the memory sites for inclusion were identified purely from unrestricted, commonly available information and therefore most likely to comprise a balanced cross section of ASSI-related public memory sites.

Firstly, a simple email information request to public visitor centres run by local volunteers who have a knowledge of local history and environments, while being apart from vested stakeholder interests, gauged typical local awareness of ASSI memory sites and sampled insider discourse and practice (see Appendix 3 for email request template). Secondly, a digital content analysis sampled ASSI-related civic memorials via structured heritage databases and unstructured (internet search engine generated) sources. Thirdly, fieldwork involving the physical analysis and digital photographing of monuments *in situ* at the identified key sugar towns sampled *outsider* observations through the phenomenological approach of direct observation (Tilley 1994:173-196).

This three-pronged approach is designed to avoid conceptual divides that may be present between traditional data and theory approaches, such as searching for data to prove a theory, or searching for theoretical models to fit



the data. The resulting data assemblage is therefore a representative sample rather than an exhaustive or contrived list and provides the scope needed to explore the wider theoretical aims of this thesis.

### **4.2.3 Sites Selection Method 1: Visitor Centre Email Response**

Of the 22 visitor centres sampled (table 4.1), 50% did not respond, indicating that the operators did not have specific knowledge of any ASSI memory sites in their local areas, or chose not to reply. Of the 11 respondents, five (45%) recommended contacting government agencies, a further five (45%) provided actual memory sites and the final two (10%) included community-led physical interactions with the ASSI past in the form of a kinaesthetic musical performance and a commemorative tomb opening activity. The general insider information provided five direct sites and two memory methods, none of which were included in government heritage lists, and did not appear in the initial internet search.

These email responses demonstrate that, although the existence of South Sea Islanders and their history in the local area is known amongst the general community, it does not appear as heritage information at the tourism interface level, with the overall recommendation being to contact individuals or offices that deal with such things. These recommendations were not followed up because it was deemed that to collect initial raw data from the private or government officials mentioned would compromise the premise of investigating material manifestations of public/communal memory by possibly implicating biased or politically motivated responses.

**Table 4.1: Visitor centre email responses**

| CENTRE NAME   | CENTRE ADDRESS                                       | CONTACT DETAILS  | RESULT   |
|---|--|--|--|
| Capricorn Coast Visitor Information Centre                          | Ross Creek Roundabout Scenic Highway, Yeppoon        | <a href="mailto:yeppoon@capricorn-tourism.com.au">yeppoon@capricorn-tourism.com.au</a>           | 30/09/2013<br>Centre supervisor emailed information of 3 books created by previous council               |
| Customs House Visitor Information Centre                            | 208 Quay Street, Rockhampton                         | <a href="mailto:touristinfo@capri-corn tourism.com.au">touristinfo@capri-corn tourism.com.au</a> | No Response  |
| Rockhampton Heritage Village Visitor Information Centre             | Boundary Road, Parkhurst, Rockhampton                | <a href="mailto:touristinfo@capri-corn tourism.com.au">touristinfo@capri-corn tourism.com.au</a> | No Response  |
| The Spire Visitor Information Centre                                | 176 Gladstone Road, Rockhampton                      | <a href="mailto:infocentre@capri-corn tourism.com.au">infocentre@capri-corn tourism.com.au</a>   | No Response  |
| Bundaberg West Visitor Information Centre                           | 271 Bourbong Street, Bundaberg                       | <a href="mailto:info@bundabergregion.org">info@bundabergregion.org</a>                           | 30/09/2013<br>Respondent phoned with contact of individual who has 'Kanaka' burial sites on his property |
| Childers Visitor Information Centre                                 | Palace Memorial Building, Churchill Street, Childers | <a href="mailto:childersvisitors@bundaberg.qld.gov.au">childersvisitors@bundaberg.qld.gov.au</a> | No Response  |
| Gin Gin Visitor Information Centre                                  | 48 Mulgrave Street, Gin Gin                          | <a href="mailto:ggvic@bundabergregion.org">ggvic@bundabergregion.org</a>                         | No Response  |
| RM Williams Australian Bush Learning and Visitor Information Centre | Burnett Highway, Eidsvold                            | <a href="mailto:info@williamscentre.com.au">info@williamscentre.com.au</a>                       | 30/09/2013<br>Respondent emailed with contact for the Eidsvold & District Historical Society             |
| Hervey Bay Visitor Information Centre                               | Cnr Herveybay and Urraween Road, Hervey Bay          | <a href="mailto:tourism@fraser-coast.qld.gov.au">tourism@fraser-coast.qld.gov.au</a>             | No Response  |
| Maryborough Fraser Visitor Information Centre                       | City Hall, Kent Street, Maryborough                  | <a href="mailto:tourismmb@fraser-coast.qld.au">tourismmb@fraser-coast.qld.au</a>                 | 30/09/2013<br>Respondent emailed suggesting tourist walks of the area                                    |

| CENTRE NAME   | CENTRE ADDRESS                             | CONTACT DETAILS  | RESULT  |
|---|--|--|---|
| Cairns and Tropical North Visitor Information Centre    | 51 The Esplanade, Cairns                   | <a href="mailto:info@ttng.org.au">info@ttng.org.au</a>                             | 30/09/2013 Respondent emailed with contact of Cairns Historical Society ( <a href="mailto:hist-soc@cairnsmuseum.org.au">hist-soc@cairnsmuseum.org.au</a> )  |
| Babinda Information Centre                              | Munro Street, Babinda                      | <a href="mailto:info@babindainfo-centre.com.au">info@babindainfo-centre.com.au</a> | 29/09/2013 Respondent email mentioning 'tombstone openings'   |
| Innisfail Information Centre                            | Bruce Highway, Tully                       | <a href="mailto:tullytourism@ccr-c.qld.gov.au">tullytourism@ccr-c.qld.gov.au</a>   | 29/09/2013 Email recommending Tully Library and the Mourilyan (Sugar Museum) Heritage Centre  |
| Cardwell Rainforest and Reef Visitor Information Centre | Victoria Street, Cardwell                  | <a href="mailto:info@greatgreenwaytourism.com">info@greatgreenwaytourism.com</a>   | No Response   |
| Highway Visitor Information Centre Townsville           | Bruce Highway, South of Townsville, Stuart | <a href="mailto:tel@tel.com.au">tel@tel.com.au</a>                                 | No Response   |
| Burdekin Visitor Information Centre                     | Plantation Park, Bruce Highway, Ayr        | <a href="mailto:burdekintourism@bigpond.com">burdekintourism@bigpond.com</a>       | No Response   |
| Burdekin Gateway Visitor Information Centre             | Railways Avenue, Home Hill                 | <a href="mailto:burdekintourism@bigpond.com">burdekintourism@bigpond.com</a>       | No Response   |
| Bowen Visitor Information Centre                        | Bruce Highway, South Bowen                 | <a href="mailto:info@tourismbowen.com.au">info@tourismbowen.com.au</a>             | 29/09/2014 Respondent emailed about 'Behind the Cane' musical and the 'Girudala' community involvement, mural of ASSI at the local IGA supermarket, and also monument at Yasso Point, at mouth of the Don River |

| CENTRE NAME                              | CENTRE ADDRESS                      | CONTACT DETAILS  | RESULT  |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Mackay Visitor Information Centre        | 320 Nebo Road, Mackay               | <a href="mailto:info@mackayregion.com">info@mackayregion.com</a>         | 03/10/2013<br>Respondent email re the 'Sugar Cubes' and the Lagoon Meeting House  |
| Melba House Visitor Information Centre   | Eungella Road, via Mackay in Marian | <a href="mailto:melba@mackayregion.com">melba@mackayregion.com</a>       | 29/09/2013<br>Respondent emailed with contact suggestion of Commonwealth Development Officer at the Mackay Regional Council |
| The Town Hall Visitor Information Centre | 63 Sydney Street, Mackay            | <a href="mailto:townhall@mackayregion.com">townhall@mackayregion.com</a> | No Response   |
| Sarina Tourist Art and Craft Centre      | 1 Railway Square, Sarina            | <a href="mailto:sarinainfo@easynet.net.au">sarinainfo@easynet.net.au</a> | 01/10/2013<br>Respondent emailed suggesting Mackay Regional Council Community Development as contact                        |

The email responses also informed the thesis database because they ignored the most obvious historical sugar relics on the landscape: the industrial sugar mills and remaining labour barracks accommodation buildings. That these were not mentioned by respondents indicates current sugar mills are not generally linked with the memory of ASSI people and so were not included in the thesis data. It transpires that this actually reflects a more intimate local knowledge of the overall sugar story, because the Islanders were not generally involved in the internal workings of the sugar

mills, as their labour was more intensively used in field clearings and cuttings and the barracks remaining on contemporary landscapes are predominantly from the later European worker period (Wills 2009:168).

#### 4.2.4 Sites Selection Method 2: Structured Heritage Databases

**Table 4.2: ASSI-related places listed on heritage databases**

| Heritage List         | Status          | Number sites listed | % of database total |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| QHR                   | statutory       | 10                  | 24%                 |
| NTA(Q)                | ngo             | (two also on QHR) 2 | 5%                  |
| RNE                   | non-statutory   | (two also on QHR) 3 | 7%                  |
| NSWSHR                | statutory       | 2                   | 5%                  |
| Total heritage listed |                 | 13                  | 32%                 |
| MA                    | private         | 16                  | 38%                 |
| Total database listed | Thesis sites 42 | 29                  | 70%                 |

The search of structured heritage databases showed that 13 (32%) ASSI-related memory sites appeared in government heritage lists, while 16 (38%) were included in the privately operated 'Monuments Australia' list. There are no ASSI places listed on either the Australian National Heritage List, a 'list of natural, historic and Indigenous places of outstanding significance to the nation' (<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list>), or the Commonwealth Heritage List, 'a list of natural, Indigenous and historic heritage places owned or controlled by the Australian Government' (<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/commonwealth-heritage-list>).

Two ASSI-related places were listed by The National Trust of Australia (Queensland) (NTA[Q]), 'a membership-based community organisation that works to promote the natural, Indigenous and cultural heritage of [the] state' (<https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/about-us-qld/>), and three places were listed on the Register of the National Estate (RNE), which was closed in 2007 (<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/register-national-estate>). The Australian Government Department of the Environment considers that information from this register, although no longer current, may be relevant to statutory decisions about protection.

Of the three ASSI-related entries, only one has the status 'registered', which 'does not in itself create a requirement to protect the place under Commonwealth law', while two have the status of 'indicative place', which means that '[d]ata provided to or obtained by the Australian Heritage Council or the former Australian Heritage Commission was entered into the database and the place was at some stage in the assessment process [however] a decision on whether the place should be entered in the Register of the National Estate was not made' (Australian Government Department of the Environment website).

The Queensland Heritage Register (QHR), a statutory heritage register, includes 11 ASSI memory sites that are incorporated in the thesis database. According to this register '[p]laces entered in the Queensland Heritage Register reflect the pattern of Queensland's history and regional



development. They illustrate the key human endeavours that have determined our economic development, as well as the fundamental political, social and cultural forces that have shaped our society' (Queensland Government Heritage Register 2016:1 viewed on-line 19/04/2016 at <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/heritage/register/search/>). Of the 1722 heritage places protected by the Queensland Heritage Act, search results for 'South Sea Islander' returned 34 hits, with only 11 able to fit the thesis criteria of an ASSI memory site. Two sites from the New South Wales State Heritage Register (NSWSHR), due to their close proximity to Queensland, have been included in the thesis data. They are listed in the inventory from information provided by a local council from their local environment plan and community based heritage studies (Ainsworth Heritage Study 2012).

The low number of usable QHR sites is due to issues of relevance, as the majority of results merely mention the use of indentured labour in the broader history of the listing. For example, in the Warwick General Cemetery listing, entered on the 27th April 2001, the actual reference to South Sea Islanders was buried amongst the detailed history: 'Not all graves are those of important people, a South Sea Islander was buried in 1879 and another in 1881, and an 1880 grave is that of James Caulfield who died as a result of a railway blasting operation' (QHR 605152). Perhaps 'famous' or 'well known' would suit this entry rather than 'important'.

Other entries were not included for similar reasons, such as where general historical significance referred to indentured Islander labour as part of the broader background of the site, architecture or person honoured by the memorial, rather than being an integral component of the place. Examples include 'He advocated the continued use of South Sea Islander labour', regarding the T.J. Byrnes Monument (QHR ID 602076); 'Initially, Queensland sugar cane was grown on large plantations, using indentured South Sea Islander labour', regarding the Daintree Inn entry (QHR ID 602803); and 'The Campbells employed South Sea Islander labour' referring to the Industrial Ruins, Macleay Island (QHR ID 601062).

The Morayfield Plantation Remains listing (QHR ID 645614) captures the currently constrained 'potential' for South Sea Islander heritage to be listed in Australia:

Any archaeological artefacts found at this place have potential to provide important information on key aspects of Queensland history, particularly the development of early sugar growing, cultivation, processing and distilling operations, and the role of South Sea Islander peoples in Queensland's sugar industry. The identification of domestic refuse has potential to provide important insights into the everyday lives of those people who lived and worked on the plantation; lives that are not well documented elsewhere. Archaeological investigations of such artefacts would help illustrate the differences in living conditions between Islanders and other labourers who worked in Queensland's early sugar industry (QHR ID 645614).

In this way, the Queensland Heritage Register provides yet more evidence that the ASSI event still languishes in the mists of the liminal, transient spaces of historical memory, requiring more attention to bring it fully into the focus of general public memory.

The privately funded volunteer organisation Monument Australia (<http://www.monumentaustralia.org.au>), a historical and educational research site which records public monuments and memorials in Australia, contained the highest number of ASSI memory sites of any heritage database, with 16 sites. The Monument Australia team attempts to fill a gap in civil record keeping by providing a general database of existing Australian monuments. It is continually being updated, but is not comprehensive, as it relies on the efforts of several dedicated volunteers and, as such, contains minor inaccuracies in GPS and recording data.

### **4.2.5 Sites Selection Method 3: Unstructured Internet Search Engines And Field Work**

The collection of ASSI-related memory sites via on-line search queries makes use of the broad general scope of the internet to enable ASSI-related memorials and memory sites in use by the public, as well as those in government heritage registers to be included. For example, sites mentioned on travel or holiday blogs are able to be accessed, in addition to those on heritage lists. Fieldwork collected extra sites through survey and word of mouth, corrected mistakes of location or description from on-line sources, and provided additional contextual information for some sites. Unfortunately, some memory sites were unable to be included at this time due to the personal nature or fragile context of their memory connections. This made them unsuitable for the purposes of this study, which focuses on sites already established in the broader public memory provenance. For example, the following were excerpted from the 'Cultural Sites Guide - Joskeleigh & Keppel Sands 1998' by the now defunct Livingstone Shire Council's Community Development Centre in conjunction with the Australian South Sea Islander community. Although one of three publications produced between 1998 and 2001, neither the current Rockhampton Regional Council nor public library holds an accessible copy. The following list is copied from a private copy and shows the mixed type and vulnerability of places which hold memory related to the ASSI experience.

- |                                 |                                       |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. The Hoop Pine Trees          | 17. The Old Post Office               |
| 2. Melamoos' House              | 18. Joskeleigh School                 |
| 3. Edmund's House Site          | 19. Saltpan Cricket Ground            |
| 4. The Mango Trees              | 20. Mary Querro's House Site          |
| 5. The Ranch                    | 21. Long Beach                        |
| 6. The Date Palm                | 22. Girt Island                       |
| 7. The Gospel Hall              | 23. Duby's Lane                       |
| 8. Peter's Gate                 | 24. Lime Trees                        |
| 9. The Red Eye Tree             | 25. Chinaman's Hand Tree              |
| 10. Bong's Corner               | 26. The Bullrush                      |
| 11. Bob Bong's Homesite         | 27. Price's Corner                    |
| 12. The Cemetery                | 28. Old School Site on Keppel Sands   |
| 13. Original Islander Campsites | 29. Mabel Edmund Recreation<br>Ground |
| 14. Bow and Arrow Tree          | 30. Keppel Sands Beach                |
| 15. Site of the Stockyards      | 31. The Fig Tree                      |
| 16. The Old Church Site         | 32. Elgalla Flats Race Track          |

#### **4.2.6 Data Collection Recording Policy And Data Standards**

In order to promote reliability and consistency in recording the data, the author and one assistant physically examined and recorded each ASSI-related memory site in detail. This approach ensured that no obvious biases occurred in the data recording process and also enabled observer impressions of memory places to be captured, an experience which is not available through documents and image sources alone.

For the purposes of this thesis, as the ASSI-related memory site locations cover so large an area and the questions asked of them are broad, it is necessary to be flexible. It is important for both form and context fields to be capable of recording the differences between location and community preferences, while remaining relevant to each memorial and the differences between them. In this way the analysis procedure is capable of identifying variations of details and relationships that may prove local as well as universal.

With this in mind, the raw data was firstly entered in a detailed format capable of including comprehensive background data, inscription details and additional notes and source information for relational and in-depth interpretations, as shown below (figure 4.3).

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Name                    |  |
| Location GPS data       |  |
| Street Address          |  |
| Date Recorded           |  |
| Place Category          |  |
| Form / style / fabric   |  |
| Designer / Builder Name |  |
| Dedication Date         |  |
| Theme(s)                |  |
| Inscription             |  |
| Notes/ Sources          |  |
| Image                   |  |
| Heritage Status Listing |  |
| Current condition       |  |
| Access and amenities    |  |

**Figure 4.3: Data entry template**

Once the most stable contextual types were identified, the variations within those types were listed to identify different groups (Latour 2005:121; Martin 2013:125). Table 4.3 (below) is the summarised version of the extended data entry sheets, reduced to fit basic parameters of theme, form, fabric, function, site, year dedicated, sponsor and whether or not heritage listed. These variables also speak to the quadrant framework, with 'theme' fitting quadrant 1 as representing historical intent, 'form' and 'fabric' situated in quadrant 2 as physical agency and material, 'function' belonging in quadrant 3 as a cultural concept, and 'site', 'sponsor' and 'heritage listing' part of the social networking systems of quadrant 4.


**Table: 4.3 Summary Thesis Database**


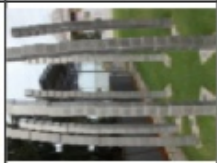

| IMAGE   | NAME   | GPS                    | THEME                             | FORM                  | FABRIC | FUNCTION  | SITE                                    | YEAR | INITIATOR           | H/L                                   |
|---|--|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|---|---|------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
|    | Mossman<br>Cane-cutters<br>Memorial          | -16 27.47<br>145 22.34 | sugar industry                    | artwork               | metal  | anniversary<br>marker<br>(centenary of<br>federation) | public space<br>urban                   | 2001 | local<br>government | (MA)                                  |
|    | Port Douglas<br>Sugar Wharf                  | -16 28.80<br>145 27.64 | sugar industry                    | structure             | timber | relict  | public space<br>/water front<br>urban   | 1904 | local<br>government | NTAQ<br>1983<br>QHR<br>600466<br>1992 |
|   | Cairns<br>Esplanade<br>Interpretive<br>Nodes | -16 55.00<br>145 46.50 | ASSI<br>historical event          | interpretive<br>board | mixed  | explicitly<br>memorial                                | public space<br>/water front<br>central | 2003 | local<br>government | No                                    |
|  | Gordonvale<br>Cane Farmer<br>Statue          | -17 05.54<br>145 47.19 | local history /<br>sugar industry | statue                | metal  | explicitly<br>memorial                                | public space<br>central                 | 1995 | private<br>sponsor  | (MA)                                  |
| 1   |  |                        |                                   |                       |        |   |   |      |                     |                                       |
| 2   |  |                        |                                   |                       |        |   |   |      |                     |                                       |
| 3   |  |                        |                                   |                       |        |   |   |      |                     |                                       |
| 4   |  |                        |                                   |                       |        |   |   |      |                     |                                       |



| IMAGE   | NAME  | GPS                    | THEME                                | FORM                  | FABRIC              | FUNCTION   | SITE                                    | YEAR                  | INITIATOR   | H/L  |
|---|---|------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--|---|-----------------------|---|--|
|    | Gordonvale<br>Sugar-<br>Nature's Gift<br>Mosaic | -17 05.54<br>145 47.19 | local history /<br>sugar industry    | artwork               | ceramic /<br>mosaic | anniversary<br>marker<br>(centenary of<br>local sugar)         | public space<br>central                 | 1995                  | private /<br>local<br>government/<br>community<br>group | (MA)   |
|    | Fishery Falls<br>ASSI<br>Monument               | -17 11.11<br>145 53.25 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event | interpretive<br>board | stone /<br>concrete | explicitly<br>memorial   | public space<br>urban                   | 1998<br>renew<br>2013 | local<br>government/<br>ASSI group                      | (MA)   |
|   | Innisfail<br>River<br>Reflections<br>Mosaic     | -17 31.35<br>146 01.92 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event | artwork               | ceramic<br>/ mosaic | explicitly<br>memorial   | public space<br>/water front<br>central | 1999                  | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group                     | (MA)   |
|  | Innisfail<br>Cane-cutters<br>Memorial           | -17 31.44<br>146 01.95 | local history /<br>sugar industry    | statue                | marble              | anniversary<br>marker<br>(centenary of<br>Queensland<br>state) | public space<br>/water front<br>central | 1959                  | community<br>group                                      | RNE<br>102020<br>QHR<br>602041<br>2003<br>(MA) |

|    | IMAGE   | NAME  | GPS                    | THEME                             | FORM                  | FABRIC              | FUNCTION               | SITE                                    | YEAR                                  | INITIATOR  | H/L  |
|----|---|---|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|--|------|
| 9  |    | Innisfail<br>Fitzgerald<br>Landing<br>Cairn | -17 31.44<br>146 01.96 | local history /<br>sugar industry | plaque /<br>cairn     | stone/<br>concrete  | explicitly<br>memorial | public space<br>/water front<br>central | 1949                                  | local<br>government                                      | (MA) |
| 10 |    | Mourilyan<br>Sugar<br>Heritage<br>Centre    | -17 34.90<br>146 02.48 | local history /<br>sugar industry | interpretive<br>board | mixed               | museum<br>collection   | private land /<br>building<br>rural     | 2004                                  | private<br>sponsor                                       | No   |
| 11 |   | Ingham<br>Immigrants<br>Remembrance<br>Wall | -18 39.10<br>146 09.58 | local history /<br>sugar industry | plaque                | stone /<br>concrete | explicitly<br>memorial | public space<br>central                 | 1987<br>renew<br>and<br>moved<br>2014 | private /<br>local<br>government/c<br>community<br>group | (MA) |
| 12 |  | Townsville<br>Robert Towns<br>Statue        | -19 15.62<br>146 49.07 | particular<br>person              | statue                | metal               | explicitly<br>memorial | public space<br>/water front<br>central | 2005                                  | local<br>government                                      | (MA) |

|    | IMAGE   | NAME                                 | GPS                    | THEME                                  | FORM                  | FABRIC             | FUNCTION               | SITE                                   | YEAR | INITIATOR                                      | H/L |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|------|--|-----|
| 13 |    | Bowen<br>Yasso Point<br>Cairn        | -19 58.05<br>148 13.55 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | plaque                | stone /<br>boulder | explicitly<br>memorial | public space /<br>water front<br>urban | 2000 | local<br>government/<br>ASSI group             | No  |
| 14 |    | Bowen<br>Yasso Point<br>Marker       | -19 58.11<br>148 13.52 | particular people                      | plaque                | timber             | explicitly<br>memorial | public space /<br>water front<br>urban | 2000 | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group            | No  |
| 15 |   | Bowen<br>Yasso Point<br>Shelter Shed | -19 58.08<br>148 13.54 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event   | interpretive<br>board | metal              | explicitly<br>memorial | public space /<br>water front<br>urban | 2015 | local<br>government<br>industry/ ASSI<br>group | No  |
| 16 |  | Bowen<br>ASSI<br>Mural               | -20 00.91<br>148 14.67 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event   | artwork               | mixed              | explicitly<br>memorial | private building<br>central            | 1998 | local<br>government                            | No  |

|    | IMAGE   | NAME                              | GPS                    | THEME                            | FORM      | FABRIC          | FUNCTION            | SITE                              | YEAR | INITIATOR                     | H/L                             |
|----|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 17 |    | Mackay Habana Causeway            | -20 59.43<br>149 02.21 | local history / sugar industry   | structure | stone           | relict              | private land rural                | 2010 | local government              | QHR 602749 2010                 |
| 18 |    | Mackay Sugar Cubes                | -21 08.38<br>149 11.33 | cultural heritage / ASSI event   | artwork   | metal           | explicitly memorial | public space /water front central | 2009 | local government              | No                              |
| 19 |   | Mackay ASSI Memorial Honour Roll  | -21 09.80<br>149 09.28 | particular people                | plaque    | stone / boulder | explicitly memorial | public space / water front urban  | 1996 | community group / ASSI group  | Old. war memorial register 2009 |
| 20 |  | Mackay ASSI Cane-cutters Memorial | -21 09.81<br>149 09.29 | cultural heritage / ASSI event   | statue    | metal           | explicitly memorial | public space / water front urban  | 1994 | ASSI group/community group    | No                              |
| 21 |  | Mackay Lagoons Meeting House      | -21 09.81<br>149 09.30 | local history/ ASSI place marker | structure | timber          | explicitly memorial | public space / water front urban  | 1993 | local government / ASSI group | No                              |

|    | IMAGE   | NAME  | GPS                    | THEME                                  | FORM      | FABRIC | FUNCTION               | SITE                                 | YEAR | INITIATOR                           | H/L                   |
|----|---|---|------------------------|--|-----------|--------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 22 |    | Mackay<br>Forgotten<br>People<br>Tree Plantings | -21 09.80<br>149 09.28 | particular people                      | structure | timber | explicitly<br>memorial | public space<br>urban                | 1996 | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group | No                    |
| 23 |    | Homebush<br>Mission Hall                        | -21 16.28<br>149 03.78 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | structure | metal  | artefact / relict      | private land /<br>building<br>rural  | 1997 | community<br>group /<br>ASSI group  | QHR<br>601705<br>1997 |
| 24 |   | Yeppoon<br>Sugar Wagon<br>Trail                 | -23 07.43<br>150 44.59 | local history /<br>sugar industry      | structure | stone  | relict                 | public space<br>urban                | 1996 | local<br>government                 | RNE<br>100841<br>1996 |
| 25 |  | Rockhampton<br>St John's<br>Church              | -23 21.30<br>150 31.58 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | structure | mixed  | artefact / relict      | private land /<br>build-ing<br>urban | 2003 | community<br>group                  | QHR<br>602342<br>2003 |






|    | IMAGE   | NAME  | GPS                    | THEME                                  | FORM      | FABRIC              | FUNCTION                    | SITE                                | YEAR   | INITIATOR           | H/L   |
|----|---|---|------------------------|--|-----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| 26 |    | Joskeleigh<br>ASSI<br>Museum                    | -23 22.06<br>150 46.98 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event   | structure | mixed               | museum<br>collection        | private land /<br>building<br>rural | 2001   | ASSI group          | No  |
| 27 |    | Joskeleigh<br>Sandhills<br>Historic<br>Cemetery | -23 22.06<br>150 46.74 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | plaque    | mixed               | cemetery /<br>grave markers | grave yard<br>rural                 | first used<br>1880<br>recognis<br>ed 1984<br>QHR<br>1992 | ASSI group          | NTAQ<br>1981<br><br>QHR<br>600659<br>1992<br>(MA) |
| 28 |   | Mon Repos<br>Kanaka built<br>Stone Wall         | -24 47.92<br>152 26.54 | local history /<br>sugar industry      | structure | stone /<br>boulders | artefact / relict           | private land<br>rural               | built<br>1880-<br>1900<br>QHR<br>2001                    | local<br>government | QHR<br>602230<br><br>2001                         |
| 29 |  | Sunnyside<br>Sugarcane<br>Plantation            | -24 51.29<br>152 24.74 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | structure | mixed               | cemetery /<br>grave markers | private land /<br>building<br>rural | burials<br>1880-<br>1900<br>QHR<br>1996                  | private<br>sponsor  | QHR<br>601700<br><br>1996                         |

|    | IMAGE   | NAME                                   | GPS                    | THEME                                  | FORM      | FABRIC             | FUNCTION  | SITE                    | YEAR                            | INITIATOR                           | H/L                   |
|----|---|--|------------------------|--|-----------|--------------------|---|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 30 |    | Bundaberg ASSI Church and Hall         | -24 52.87<br>152 19.29 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | structure | timber             | explicitly<br>memorial                                | grave yard<br>urban     | built<br>c1920<br>moved<br>1995 | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group | QHR<br>602052<br>2000 |
| 31 |    | Childers Kanaka Memorial Totems        | -25 14.16<br>152 16.71 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event   | plaque    | metal              | anniversary<br>marker<br>(centenary of<br>federation) | public space<br>central | 2001                            | local<br>government                 | No                    |
| 32 |    | Childers Kanaka Memorial Sculptures    | -25 14.17<br>152 16.72 | local history /<br>sugar industry      | artwork   | metal              | anniversary<br>marker<br>(centenary of<br>federation) | public space<br>central | 2001                            | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group | (MA)                  |
| 33 |  | Childers Kanaka Memorial John Thompson | -25 14.36<br>152 15.46 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | plaque    | stone /<br>boulder | explicitly<br>memorial                                | private land<br>rural   | 1993                            | community<br>group                  | (MA)                  |

|    | IMAGE   | NAME                               | GPS                    | THEME                                  | FORM                  | FABRIC              | FUNCTION                    | SITE                                     | YEAR | INITIATOR                           | H/L  |
|----|---|------------------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--|------|-------------------------------------|------|
| 34 |    | Point Vernon Kanaka Memorial       | -25 15.17<br>152 48.82 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | statue                | stone /<br>concrete | cemetery /<br>grave markers | grave yard<br>urban                      | 1972 | community<br>group                  | (MA) |
| 35 |    | Maryborough Kanaka Memorial        | -25 32.28<br>152 42.34 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event   | interpretive<br>board | mixed               | explicitly<br>memorial      | public space /<br>water front<br>central | 2006 | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group | (MA) |
| 36 |    | Buderim Reconciliation at St Marks | -26 41.09<br>153 03.25 | cultural<br>heritage / ASSI<br>event   | plaque                | metal               | explicitly<br>memorial      | private land /<br>building<br>central    | 2009 | community<br>group                  | No   |
| 37 |  | Buderim Kanaka Wall on Escarpment  | -26 41.12<br>153 03.29 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | structure             | stone /<br>boulder  | artefact / relict           | private land /<br>building<br>central    | 2012 | community<br>group                  | No   |
| 38 |  | Buderim ASSI Memorial Plaque       | -26 41.13<br>153 03.03 | local history /<br>sugar industry      | plaque                | metal               | explicitly<br>memorial      | public space<br>central                  | 1998 | local<br>government                 | No   |



|    | IMAGE  | NAME                                       | GPS                    | THEME                                  | FORM   | FABRIC              | FUNCTION                   | SITE                  | YEAR | INITIATOR                           | H/L                                     |
|----|--|--|------------------------|--|--------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 39 |   | Oaklands<br>Sugar Mill<br>Remnants         | -27 05.78<br>152 58.43 | local history /<br>sugar industry      | plaque | timber              | artefact / relict          | public space<br>urban | 2009 | local<br>government                 | QHR<br>645607<br>2009                   |
| 40 |   | Chinderah<br>Corowa Space                  | -28 14.46<br>153 33.07 | particular<br>person / people          | plaque | timber              | explicitly<br>memorial     | public space<br>urban | 1986 | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group | (MA)                                    |
| 41 |   | Chinderah<br>Cemetery<br>Cairn             | -28 14.77<br>153 33.23 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | plaque | stone /<br>boulder  | cemetery /<br>grave marker | grave yard<br>urban   | 2004 | private /<br>ASSI group             | NSW/SHR                                 |
| 42 |  | Cudgen<br>Burial Ground<br>ASSI<br>Memoria | -28 14.86<br>153 33.27 | local history/<br>ASSI place<br>marker | plaque | stone /<br>concrete | explicitly<br>memorial     | grave yard<br>urban   | 1997 | local<br>government /<br>ASSI group | RNE<br>19489<br>1997<br>(MA)<br>NSW/SHR |

|    | IMAGE  | NAME   | GPS                    | THEME                          | FORM               | FABRIC | FUNCTION   | SITE                               | YEAR | INITIATOR                                | H/L |
|----|--|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--|------------------------------------|------|--|-----|
| 43 |   | Refined White Exhibition                               | mobile                 | cultural heritage / ASSI event | kinetic expression | mixed  | anniversary marker (10th year of Fed Government recognition) | urban                              | 1998 | local government / industry / ASSI group | No  |
| 44 |   | Bowen Behind the Cane Musical                          | -20 1.05<br>148 14.88  | cultural heritage / ASSI event | kinetic expression | mixed  | explicitly memorial  | public space / water front central | 2011 | local government / ASSI group            | No  |
| 45 |  | Mossman Romancing the Cane Multimedia Production Kamak | -16 23.71<br>145 20.21 | local history / sugar industry | kinetic expression | mixed  | explicitly memorial  | private land / build-ing rural     | 2010 | Private                                  | No  |

### **4.2.7 The Database Variable Fields**

A useable relational database for spatial distribution analysis was then determined, as the data associated with particular ASSI social memory locations informs aspects of articulation with landscape and societal orientation, such as placements in private versus public spheres, dominant versus liminal positions and associated aspects of embedded historical memory. For this thesis, the significance of aspects of location and materials at remembrance sites concerns conditions that may affect choices of ASSI memory site form or location. These include spatio-temporal relationships of belonging in both space and time that may appear in relation to historical and current sugar landscape features, and cultural choices that may relate to morphological details of form or structure. Due to their transient, temporal and impermanent locational natures, kinetic memory items 43-45 on the data list, the mobile exhibition, ASSI musical, and multimedia performance, were not included in the database aggregates, but are discussed in Chapter 8.

For efficient and unbiased comparisons, the variable types in the reduced formats were based on relevant dimensions identified by determining the most common elements used in each category. This follows Latour's logic that the most common elements are therefore most significant:

In order to prevent these dimensions from being arbitrarily selected, the relevant dimensions were chosen by identifying the particular assumption that the most significant elements of worldview would be less changeable than elements that were less significant (Latour 2005:31).

To this end, the most recurring features across the entire data group became the database variations. Once these were established, each memorial was then considered for its most obvious fit within each category variation.

The process of identifying the relevant dimensions of variation required a means to list context types, including description, inscription and other social data details, as well as structural and locational context, in a method that could be indexed and compared. As Martin (2013) observed, 'many [archaeologists] have wished to obtain a faithful explanation of material in the ground by following the data precisely, Hodder, Binford, Childe, and many others have all confronted the difficulty of choosing which dimensions of variation were relevant and which were not' (Martin 2013:112).

This difficulty becomes apparent when reviewing the differing thematic variables employed by the Queensland Heritage Register and Monuments Australia for inclusion and categorisation of ASSI sites. Themes relating to the ASSI sites determined by the independent group Monuments Australia include: technology, industry, culture, community, landscape, settlement, agriculture, discovery, and Indigenous (sic). QHR themes, however, are more detailed and include:

- Peopling Places: Migration from outside and within
- Exploiting, utilising and transforming the land: Pastoral activities

- Exploiting, utilising and transforming the land: Agricultural activities
- Working: Working as exploited / indentured labour
- Moving goods, people and information : Using draught animals
- Moving goods, people and information: Using shipping
- Moving goods, people and information: Using postal services
- Creating social and cultural institutions: Worshipping and religious institutions
- Creating social and cultural institutions: Organisations and societies
- Creating social and cultural institutions: Commemorating significant events.

Of note is that, although both QHR and MA are listing sites related to the ASSI event and the labour of South Sea Islander people, a predominance of categories are linked to colonial themes of industry, technology and infrastructure rather than to the ASSI people themselves. When the Islanders do appear in the theme, MA refers to them as Indigenous, while QHR uses the term 'Exploited/ Indentured Labour'.

In order to determine the relevant themes for this thesis, each ASSI-related memory site was considered for its predominant, embedded historical memory, which is presented here as:

- Particular person(s) remembered
- The ASSI historical event in general

- Place markers of locations with particular ASSI relevance
- General ASSI inclusion in sugar industry memorabilia


Inscription details generally provided the more obvious theme, although there are occurrences of overlap. In these cases memory sites with particular local meanings were considered as place markers, while those which dealt in greater detail with the Islander diaspora and recruitment backgrounds were entered under the historical event variable.

The form category comprised five variables:

- Interpretive board
- Public art
- Structure
- Statue
- Plaque

In this category, sites with extended explanatory text were considered interpretive boards, whereas plaques included cairns and wooden markers.

Statues emulate living figures, while sculptures and mosaics were defined as public art. Structure included buildings and utilities, such as a wharf or wagon trail.

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Name                    | <b>4. CANE FARMER STATUE 'THE HOE MAN' - GORDONVALE</b>   |
| Location GPS data       | -17 05.54 +145 47.19  |
| Street Address          | Norman Park, Norman Street, Gordonvale, 4865  |
| Date Recorded           | 11/07/2012 by JM  |
| Place Category          | Public Park, central  |
| Form / style / fabric   | Metal Sculpted Statue - realistic life model  |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | Statue bequeathed by the estates of Charlie and May Crossland to honour the pioneers of the sugar industry in the Mulgrave Area sculpted by Holan Foundry.  |
| Dedication Date         | 22/04/1995 unveiled by CR. T.A.PYNE AM Mayor of Cairns  |
| Theme(s)                | Cultural heritage, people, industry   |
| Inscription             | THIS STATUE WAS BEQUEATHED BY THE ESTATES OF CHARLIE AND MAY CROSSLAND TO HONOUR THE PIONEERS OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN THE MULGRAVE AREA                    |
| Notes/ Sources          | MA Themed Technology, sub-themed Industry<br>Locally known as the Hoe Man, and modelled on a photo supplied by Mrs, May Crossland of an early cane pioneer. |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Good condition in council maintained park   |
| Access and amenities    | Central location in Gordonvale village, wheelchair accessible and public conveniences nearby  |

**Figure 4.4: Example of a statue memorial – The 'The Hoe Man' - Gordonvale (surrounding mosaic artwork is discussed in Chapter 7)**

As many sites were composed of a mixture of fabric components, each one was recorded according to its most prevalent component, with variables:

- stone
- timber
- metal
- ceramic
- mixed

Generally, any combination predominantly of granite, cement or rock was classified as stone, while a wooden clad building, for example, was entered as timber. Metal encompassed all metals, from bronze sculptures to an iron shelter shed. Even so, some sites contained such a combination of components, such as a museum collection, requiring that the variable field option 'mixed' was selected.

The variables fields for the 'function' category were determined according to the perceived intention of the memory site, that is, the reason for the memorial's creation, or for the site's inclusion as an ASSI memory place.

They are:

- memorial
- anniversary
- relict
- grave marker
- museum



Some memory sites were explicitly memorial in nature, whereas others were erected as part of an anniversary celebration, such as for the centenary of Federation. Memory sites in original form and place, such as original stone walls, trails or buildings were entered as 'relict'. Not all original buildings were considered relict however, as two had been moved for memorial purposes (table 4.9) and another was repurposed as a museum. Burial sites and cemetery memorials were recorded as grave markers.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>19. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER HONOUR ROLL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -21 09.80 +149 9.28  |
| Street Address         | Regional Botanical Gardens, Nebo Road, Mackay 4740   |
| Date Recorded          | 08/05/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Park, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal Plaque on Stone Boulder  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | ASSI group   |
| Dedication Date        | 25/08/1996   |
| Theme(s)               | People, War Memorial   |
| Inscription            | Two emblems of the Rising Sun<br><br>SOUTH SEA ISLANDER<br>HONOUR ROLL<br><br>WORLD WAR 1<br>W. Gorman<br><br>WORLD WAR 2<br>Pte E Bobongie Pte. H.C. Coskley Cpl. J.J. Coakley<br>Pte. R.D.Deshong Pte. W.H. Deshong (P.O.W.)<br>Pte. E.H. Gorman Pte. J.A. Gorman (K.I.A.)<br>Pte. A. Mooney Pte. P.H. Mooney Pte. R.R. Mooney<br>Cpl. S.J. Mooney Sapper C. Tonga Pte. W. Trieve<br>Sapper A.S. Yarra<br>MALAYA<br>Sgt. V.C.J. Powell<br><br>VIETNAM<br>Sapper E.W. Arrow Pte. J.W.A. Bobongi Pte. L.J. Choppy<br>Pte. Fewquandi (K.I.A.) Pte. D.A. Holmes Sgt. V.C.J. Powell |

## LEST WE FORGET

## Notes/ Sources

South Sea Islanders have fought besides other Australians and suffered the harsh indignities as Prisoners Of War. They have played their part as national servicemen, and paid the supreme sacrifice on the battlefield.

On 25th August 1994, the South Sea Islanders were recognised by the Australian Government as a distinctive ethnic group. On the 2nd Anniversary (1996) of that significant event, the memorial was unveiled by the Mackay Deputy Mayor & Charlie Tonga, a Second World War veteran and listed on the memorial(<http://www.qldwarmemorials.com.au/pages/AdvancedSearch.aspx?Search=on>).

MA Themed conflict, sub-themed multiple

## Image



## Heritage Status Listing

Yes Queensland War Memorial Register

## Current condition

Good and in use by community

## Access and amenities

Transport necessary, wheelchair accessible, toilets nearby

**Figure 4.5: South Sea Islander Honour Roll**

The memory sites' locations were considered in two categories: setting and environment. The former includes the variable fields 'public space', 'private land' and 'grave yard', while the latter distinguishes between 'central', 'urban', and 'rural'. Here, 'central' was within the central business district of a town, 'urban' included residential areas, and 'rural' was the more remote agricultural areas. A further category considered the initiator, or driving force

behind the memorial's creation, or the memory site's designation as a place of significant ASSI memory. Various entangled combinations involved instances of public petitions to local government for financial assistance to create memorials or for site and building preservation, and conversely, of councils inviting ASSI groups to collaborate in public art and memorial ventures. For the purposes of this thesis, these were reduced to the following:

- council/ government
- community group
- private sponsor
- joint contribution

In some cases the initiator was a private sponsor, such as a bequest from a deceased estate or a single community interest group. Others had several sponsors, such as the Gordonvale mosaic celebrating one hundred years of the sugar industry and installed jointly by the CSR Sugar Industry, Mulgrave Central Mill, Government Arts Grant, and Friends of Gordonvale Community Group. The 'council/ government' variable included instances of the ASSI memory site having no signage, but being listed in government heritage registers.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>41. CHINDERAH CEMETERY</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -28 14.77 +153 33.23  |
| Street Address         | Tweed Coast Road, Chinderah 2487 NSW  |
| Date Recorded          | 12 April 2016   |
| Place Category         | Burial ground, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Stone boulder with metal plaque. Gravestones and wooden picket or cast iron grave surrounds mark some of the 18 known graves.   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Private and ASSI groups   |
| Dedication Date        | 2004 (Significance updated 18/05/2004 NSW SHR)  |
| Theme(s)               | Graves marker, ASSI cultural heritage   |
| Inscription            | For their preservation & historical significance, the headstones and relics in this section have been moved to this dedicated cemetery area from various sites on private property 300 metres to the south-south east of this spot. Then follows a list of 14 persons known to have been buried in that area, the dates they died, and age at the time. This plaque was donated by the Brinsmead brothers of the Oaks, Chinderah.   |
| Notes/ Sources         | MA Themed Culture, sub-themed Indigenous<br>Cudgen sugar plantation and mill was established in 1875 by William Julius who employed about 500 ASSI who had already expired contracts. He sold to John Robb in 1892 who designated land for South Sea Island Cemetery. The Cudgen Burial Ground today is located on a private road adjacent to the Chinderah Cemetery which was constructed over several burials to access a golf range. Grave markers date from 1872 to 1960. Included amongst them is a number of headstones that were removed to this site from a nearby property as written in the plaque inscription above. |

Image



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes. Listed with New South Wales State Heritage Register 18th May 2004. Tweed Shire Council Heritage Study 2003 and 2012 (Local Government database number 2520053). |
| Current condition       | Generally maintained   |
| Access and amenities    | Street access. Private transport necessary.  |

**Figure 4.6: Chindera Cemetery**

The 'year' category refers to the date on which the site was first recognised or installed. This is based on a memorial's dedication date or the date a memory site was entered onto a heritage listing, which is not immediately obvious for some sites with extended biographies concerning usage, ownership and location. The Chinderah Cemetery for example, comprises grave markers dating from 1872 - 1960 including the relocated grave stones and wooden picket and iron grave surrounds of eighteen known South Sea Islander graves dating to the early 1900s. These were moved when a road was built over their original position to access a golf course. Although the human remains were not moved with their grave furniture, some of which

dates to the nineteenth century, for the purposes of this thesis the site is considered a grave yard, with the date 2004 which is when it was listed with the State Heritage Register.

Joskeleigh cemetery presented similar issues with date. Used as a burial ground on private land in the late 1800s to early 1900s, then purchased by the Queensland government following community lobbying and declared a reserve for cemetery purposes in 1984, it was not entered onto the Queensland State Heritage Register until 1992. Another example is the Bundaberg South Sea Islander church and hall (figure 8.7) constructed in 1920 to replace an earlier hall on the Fairymead sugar plantation. These buildings were relocated to a section of the Bundaberg cemetery in 1995. In both cases, it is the dates of recognition as a site of ASSI-related memory that were recorded, such as, for Joskeleigh Cemetery it was the date of its declaration as a cemetery in 1984 and for the church and hall the date of its relocation as an ASSI-related memory place in 1995.

Further challenges to determining the precise year that a memory site became a site of ASSI-related memory revolve around the paradoxes of authentic voice and component as discussed in chapter 2. St. John's Mission church at Rockhampton is an example of the ship of Theseus paradox, as it was originally built on site in 1896, but was rebuilt in 1912, enlarged in 1916, improved with new cladding in 1962 and entered on the Queensland Heritage Register in 2003. In this case, although the place was in continual use, the

later date was entered for its recognition as a site of ASSI-related memory. The Fishery Falls memorial, originally installed in 1998 as part of a local historical trail, was so faded that the historic content for the new panel was reinterpreted and opened at a renewing/monument revealing ceremony in 2013 as part of the ASSI 150 years commemoration. Although arguably a different memorial due to its replaced fabric and reimagined content, the original date was entered because the memorial's location first became a site of ASSI-related memory at that time.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>11. INGHAM IMMIGRANT REMEMBRANCE WALL</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -18 39.10 +146 09.58   |
| Street Address         | Jane & McIlwraith Streers, Ingham Botanical Gardens QLD. 4850  |
| Date Recorded          | 14/04/2016   |
| Place Category         | Public park, central   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Cement brick wall (2) with metal plaques.  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Mark Spina and Mario Torrisi, with local and national government, local council and private funding.   |
| Dedication Date        | 3/08/2014  |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, people, community   |
| Inscription            | <p>Immigrant Remembrance Wall<br/>           [Inscription begins with description of local history and William Bairstow Ingham after whom the area was named.]</p> <p>Paragraph four:<br/>           The gruelling work in the cane fields was carried out by South Sea Islander labourers called 'kanakas'; descendants of the kanaka families still call Ingham home to this day. However the "White Australia Policy" introduced by the government of the time meant that many of these islanders had to return to their homelands leaving the cane fields without workers. Consequently a call went out across the</p> |



world for labourers.

[Inscription continues with description of subsequent European workers and is surrounded by smaller plaques of predominantly Italian family names].

Final paragraph includes:

We invite you to add your forefathers, mothers and family names to this wall as it now acknowledges all immigrants of all nations who settled in this great sugar cane growing district.

Notes/ Sources

This memorial wall is a replica of what was predominantly an historical record of Italian family names in Ingham and replaces the original 'Settlers Wall' (Alpini monument and remembrance wall) which was unveiled on 24/01/1987 at a different location. The new memorial now invites locals to add their personal family histories to the wall.

Photograph by Diane Watson 19/10/2014

[monumentaustalia.org.au](http://monumentaustalia.org.au)

MA Themed Landscape, Sub-themed Settlement.

Image



Heritage Status Listing No.

Current condition Well maintained.

Access and amenities Public

**Figure 4.7: Ingham Immigrant Remembrance Wall**



The Theseus paradox meets the Song of Homer paradox at the Ingham Immigrants Remembrance Wall, which replaced the Alpini monument and remembrance wall built in 1987 and featuring Italian families of the area. The new wall was not only relocated, renamed and redesigned in 2014, but now includes a paragraph outlining ASSI background in the area and invites local people to 'add your forefathers, mothers and family names to this wall as it now acknowledges all immigrants of all nations who settled in this great sugar cane growing district'. Therefore, the date recorded was that of the recreated 2014 installation, which is when ASSI-related memory was included.

## 4.2.8 Thesis Variables Database

**Table 4.4: Thesis relational variables database**

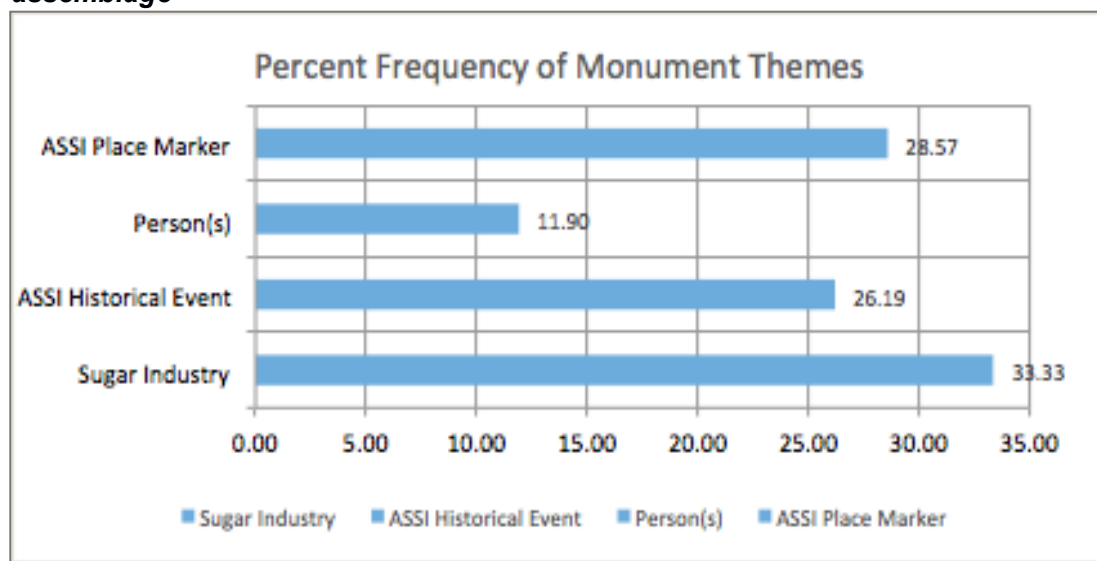
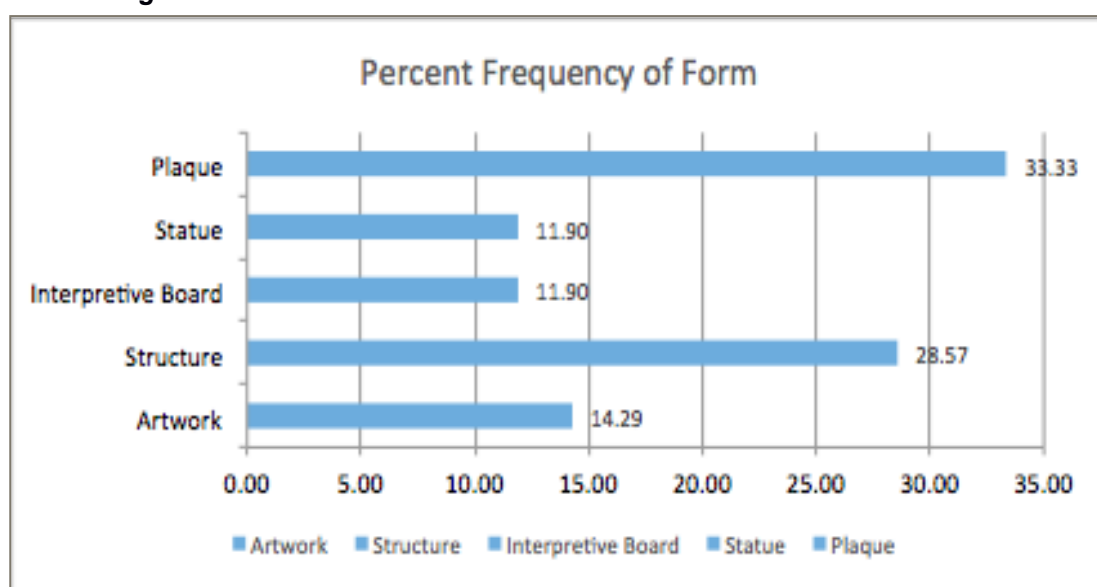
| Name                                      | Latitude  | Longitude | Theme                 | Form               | Fabric  | Function     | Setting      | Environment | Initiator            | H/L | Year |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|-----|------|
| 1 Mossman Cane-cutters Memorial           | -16 27.47 | 145 22.34 | Sugar Industry        | Artwork            | Metal   | Anniversary  | Public Space | Urban       | Council / Government |     | 2001 |
| 2 Port Douglas Sugar Wharf                | -16 28.80 | 145 27.64 | Sugar Industry        | Structure          | Timber  | Relict       | Public Space | Urban       | Council / Government | Y   | 1904 |
| 3 Cairns Esplanade Interpretive Nodes     | -16 55.00 | 145 46.50 | ASSI Historical Event | Interpretive Board | Mix     | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 2003 |
| 4 Gordonvale Cane Farmer Statue           | -17 05.54 | 145 47.19 | Sugar Industry        | Statue             | Metal   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Private Sponsor      |     | 1995 |
| 5 Gordonvale Sugar Mosaic                 | -17 05.54 | 145 47.19 | Sugar Industry        | Artwork            | Ceramic | Anniversary  | Public Space | Central     | Joint Contribution   |     | 1995 |
| 6 Fishery Falls ASSI Monument             | -17 11.11 | 145 53.25 | ASSI Historical Event | Interpretive Board | Stone   | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Joint Contribution   |     | 1998 |
| 7 Innisfail River Reflections Mosaic      | -17 31.35 | 146 01.92 | ASSI Historical Event | Interpretive Board | Ceramic | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Joint Contribution   |     | 1999 |
| 8 Innisfail Cane-cutters Memorial         | -17 31.44 | 146 01.95 | Sugar Industry        | Statue             | Stone   | Anniversary  | Public Space | Central     | Community Group      | Y   | 1959 |
| 9 Innisfail Fitzgerald Landing Cairn      | -17 31.44 | 146 01.96 | Sugar Industry        | Plaque             | Stone   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 1949 |
| 10 Mourilyan Sugar Heritage Centre        | -17 34.90 | 146 02.48 | Sugar Industry        | Interpretive Board | Mix     | Museum       | Private Land | Rural       | Private Sponsor      |     | 2004 |
| 11 Ingham Immigrants Remembrance Wall     | -18 39.10 | 146 09.58 | Sugar Industry        | Plaque             | Stone   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Joint Contribution   |     | 2014 |
| 12 Townsville Robert Towns Statue         | -19 15.62 | 146 49.07 | Person(s)             | Statue             | Metal   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 2005 |
| 13 Bowen Yasso Point Cairn                | -19 58.05 | 148 13.55 | ASSI Place Marker     | Plaque             | Stone   | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Joint Contribution   |     | 2000 |
| 14 Bowen Yasso Point Marker               | -19 58.11 | 148 13.52 | Person(s)             | Plaque             | Timber  | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Joint Contribution   |     | 2000 |
| 15 Bowen Yasso Point Shelter              | -19 58.08 | 148 13.54 | ASSI Historical Event | Interpretive Board | Metal   | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Council / Government |     | 2015 |
| 16 Bowen ASSI Mural                       | -20 00.91 | 148 14.67 | ASSI Historical Event | Artwork            | Mix     | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 1998 |
| 17 Mackay Habana Causeway                 | -20 59.43 | 149 02.21 | Sugar Industry        | Structure          | Stone   | Relict       | Public Space | Rural       | Council / Government | Y   | 2010 |
| 18 Mackay Sugar Cubes                     | -21 08.38 | 149 11.33 | ASSI Historical Event | Artwork            | Metal   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 2009 |
| 19 Mackay ASSI Memorial Honour Roll       | -21 09.80 | 149 09.28 | Person(s)             | Plaque             | Stone   | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Community Group      |     | 1996 |
| 20 Mackay ASSI Cane-cutters Memorial      | -21 09.81 | 149 09.29 | ASSI Historical Event | Statue             | Stone   | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Community Group      |     | 1994 |
| 21 Mackay Lagoons Meeting House           | -21 09.81 | 149 09.30 | ASSI Place Marker     | Structure          | Timber  | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Council / Government |     | 1993 |
| 22 Mackay Forgotten People Tree Plantings | -21 09.80 | 149 09.28 | Person(s)             | Structure          | Timber  | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Community Group      |     | 1996 |
| 23 Homebush Mission Hall                  | -21 16.28 | 149 03.78 | ASSI Place Marker     | Structure          | Metal   | Relict       | Private Land | Rural       | Community Group      | Y   | 1997 |
| 24 Yeppoon Sugar Wagon Trail              | -23 07.43 | 150 44.59 | Sugar Industry        | Structure          | Stone   | Relict       | Public Space | Urban       | Council / Government | Y   | 1996 |
| 25 Rockhampton St. Johns Church           | -23 21.30 | 150 31.58 | ASSI Place Marker     | Structure          | Mix     | Relict       | Private Land | Urban       | Community Group      | Y   | 2003 |
| 26 Joskeleigh ASSI Museum                 | -23 22.06 | 150 46.98 | ASSI Historical Event | Structure          | Mix     | Museum       | Private Land | Rural       | Community Group      |     | 2001 |
| 27 Joskeleigh Sandhills Historic Cemetery | -23 22.06 | 150 46.74 | ASSI Place Marker     | Plaque             | Mix     | Grave Marker | Public Space | Rural       | Community Group      | Y   | 1984 |
| 28 Mon Repos Kanaka built Stone Wall      | -24 47.92 | 152 26.54 | Sugar Industry        | Structure          | Stone   | Relict       | Private Land | Rural       | Council / Government | Y   | 1900 |
| 29 Sunnyside Sugar-cane Plantation        | -24 51.29 | 152 24.74 | ASSI Place Marker     | Structure          | Mix     | Grave Marker | Private Land | Rural       | Private Sponsor      | Y   | 1996 |
| 30 Bundaberg ASSI Church and Hall         | -24 52.87 | 152 19.29 | ASSI Place Marker     | Structure          | Timber  | Memorial     | Grave Yard   | Urban       | Council / Government | Y   | 1995 |
| 31 Childers Kanaka Memorial Totems        | -25 14.36 | 152 15.46 | ASSI Place Marker     | Plaque             | Stone   | Memorial     | Private Land | Rural       | Community Group      |     | 1993 |
| 32 Childers Kanaka Memorial Sculptures    | -25 14.16 | 152 16.71 | ASSI Historical Event | Plaque             | Metal   | Anniversary  | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 2001 |
| 33 Childers Kanaka Memorial               | -25 14.17 | 152 16.72 | Sugar Industry        | Artwork            | Metal   | Anniversary  | Public Space | Central     | Joint Contribution   |     | 2001 |
| 34 Point Vernon Kanaka Memorial           | -25 15.17 | 152 48.82 | ASSI Place Marker     | Statue             | Stone   | Grave Marker | Grave Yard   | Urban       | Community Group      |     | 1972 |
| 35 Maryborough Kanaka Memorial            | -25 32.28 | 152 42.34 | ASSI Historical Event | Plaque             | Metal   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 2006 |
| 36 Buderim Reconciliation at St Marks     | -26 41.09 | 153 03.25 | ASSI Historical Event | Plaque             | Mix     | Memorial     | Private Land | Central     | Community Group      |     | 2009 |
| 37 Buderim Kanaka wall on Escarpment      | -26 41.12 | 153 03.29 | ASSI Place Marker     | Structure          | Stone   | Relict       | Private Land | Central     | Community Group      |     | 2012 |
| 38 Buderim ASSI Memorial Plaque           | -26 41.13 | 153 03.03 | Sugar Industry        | Plaque             | Metal   | Memorial     | Public Space | Central     | Council / Government |     | 1998 |
| 39 Oaklands Sugar Mill Remnants           | -27 05.78 | 152 58.43 | Sugar Industry        | Plaque             | Timber  | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Council / Government | Y   | 2009 |
| 40 Chinderah Corowa Park                  | -28 14.46 | 153 33.07 | Person(s)             | Plaque             | Timber  | Memorial     | Public Space | Urban       | Joint Contribution   |     | 1986 |
| 41 Chinderah Cemetery Cairn               | -28 14.77 | 153 33.23 | ASSI Place Marker     | Plaque             | Stone   | Grave Marker | Grave Yard   | Urban       | Joint Contribution   | Y   | 2004 |
| 42 Cudgen Burial Ground ASSI Memorial     | -28 14.86 | 153 33.27 | ASSI Place Marker     | Plaque             | Stone   | Memorial     | Grave Yard   | Urban       | Joint Contribution   | Y   | 1997 |

**Table 4.5: Thesis Relational Database Variables Categories and Counts**

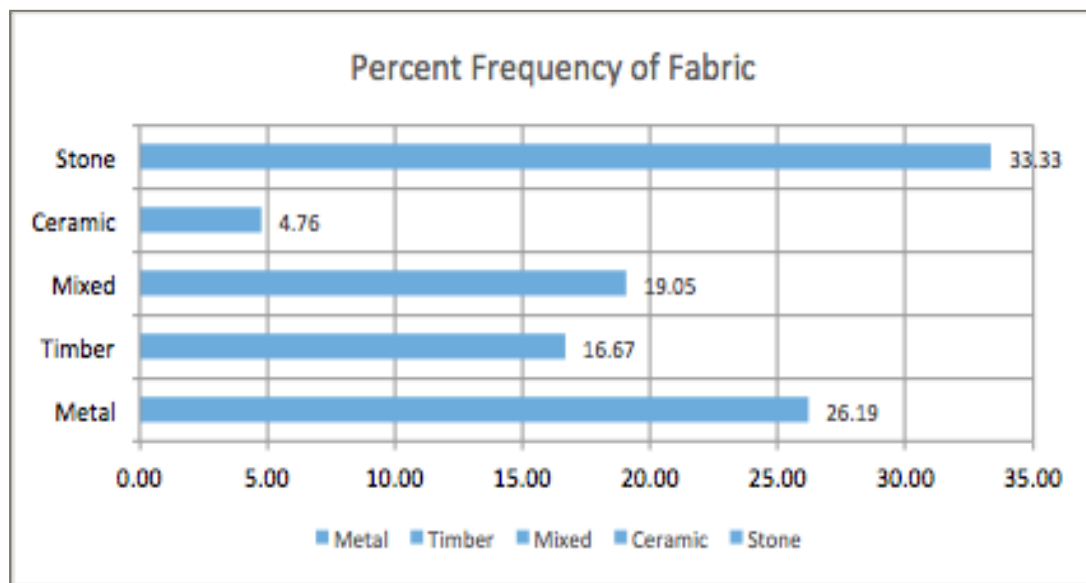
| History<br>THEME                  | Agency<br>FORM             | Material<br>FABRIC | Concept<br>FUNCTION  | Setting<br>SITE       | Setting<br>ENVIRON<br>MENT | Network<br>INITIATOR          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| person(s)<br>5                    | interpretive<br>board<br>5 | stone<br>14        | memorial<br>23       | public<br>space<br>26 | central<br>16              | council /<br>government<br>15 |
| ASSI<br>historical<br>event<br>11 | artwork<br>6               | timber<br>7        | anniversary<br>5     | private<br>land<br>11 | urban<br>20                | community<br>group<br>12      |
| ASSI place<br>marker<br>12        | structure<br>12            | metal<br>11        | relict<br>8          | grave<br>yard<br>5    | rural<br>8                 | private<br>sponsor<br>3       |
| sugar<br>industry<br>14           | statue<br>5                | ceramic<br>2       | grave<br>marker<br>4 |                       |                            | joint<br>contribution<br>12   |
|                                   | plaque<br>14               | mixture<br>8       | museum<br>2          |                       |                            |                               |
|                                   | kinetic<br>expression<br>3 |                    |                      |                       |                            |                               |

The relational variables (table 4.5 above) shows the relative frequencies of the various fields. This data was then extrapolated to calculate the percentage frequencies of the database categories to indicate apparent trends, clusters or relationships of style, form or theme across spatial or temporal parameters. At a glance this shows that a third of the ASSI-related sites were thematically connected with the sugar industry, a third took the form of a plaque, a third was composed mainly of stone, and just over a third were initiated by council bodies.

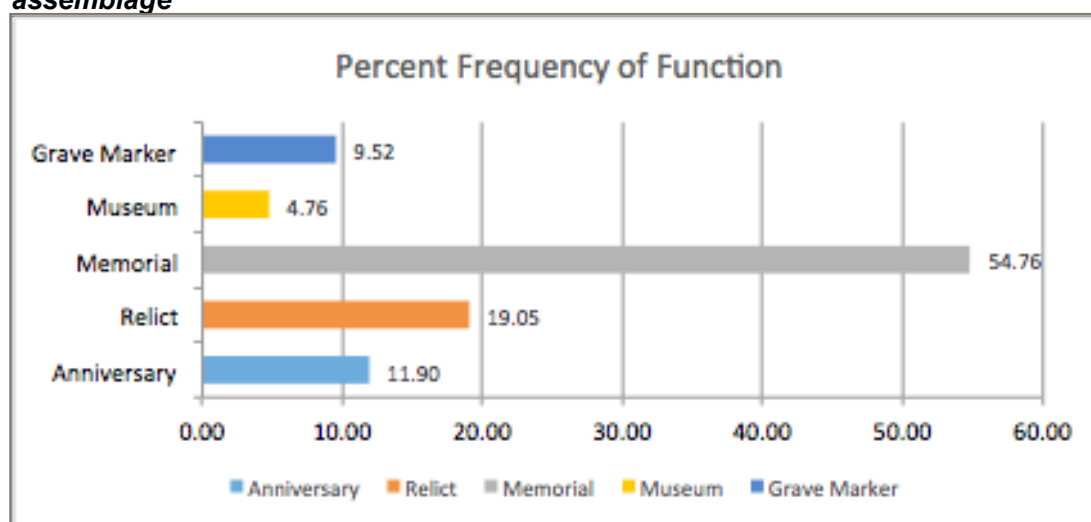
Around eighty percent were split between urban and central areas, while only 20% were found in rural areas. The primary function of half of the memory sites, however, was explicitly memorial, as opposed to place or anniversary markers, relicts, or museums. Although the database was not extensive for such comparisons, it does indicate a variable predominance in each category, although these are not related across the fields.

**Table 4.6: Frequency of themes across thesis ASSI-related memory site assemblage****Table 4.7: Frequency of form types across thesis ASSI-related memory site assemblage**

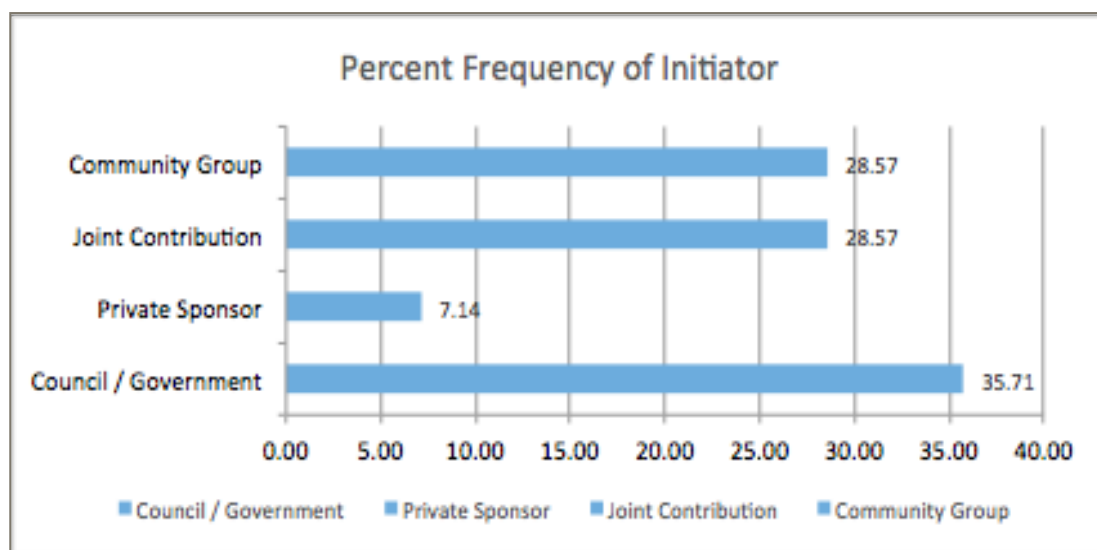
**Table 4.8: Frequency of fabric types across thesis ASSI-related memory site assemblage**



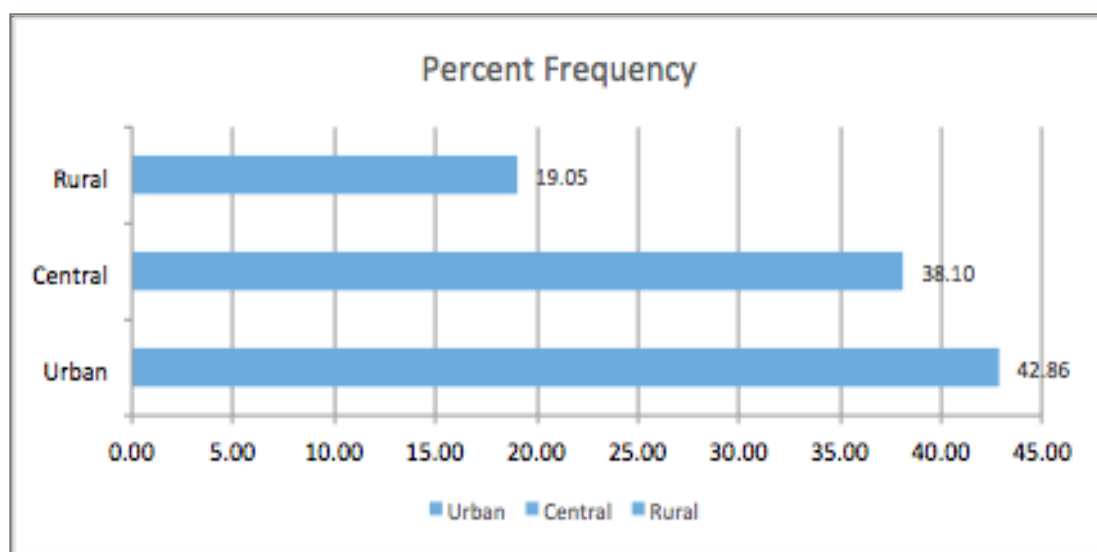
**Table 4.9: Frequency of ASSI-related memory site function across thesis assemblage**



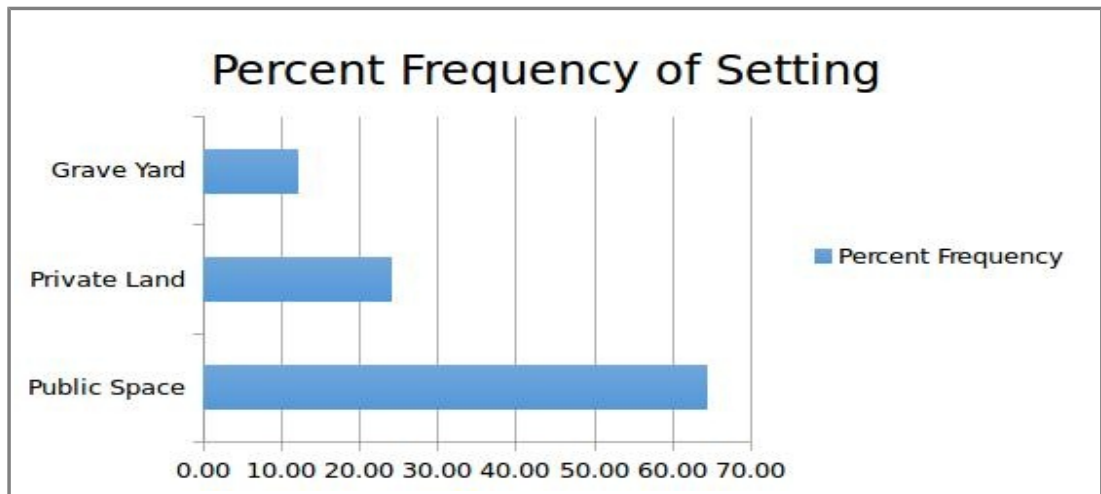
**Table 4.10: Frequency of ASSI-related memory site initiator across thesis assemblage**



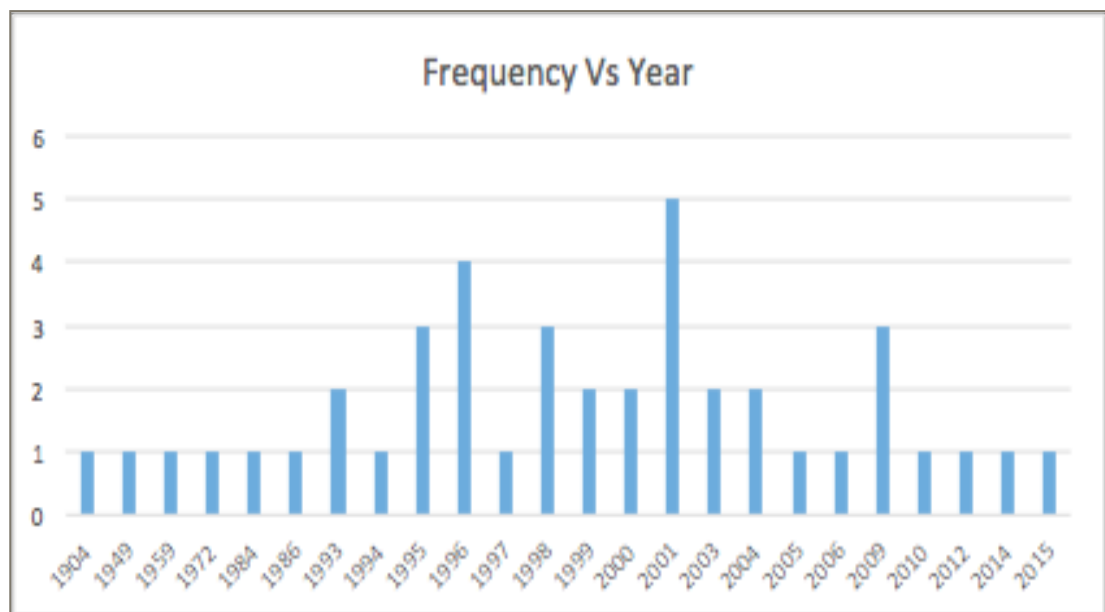
**Table 4.11: Frequency of ASSI-related memory site environment across thesis**



**Table 4.12: Frequency of ASSI-related memory site setting across thesis assemblage**



**Table 4.13: Chronological frequency of ASSI-related memory site across thesis assemblage**





The chronology of ASSI-related memory sites shows a similar number established in the last fifteen years as for the whole twentieth century. Although the frequency has remained steady since the 1990s, there are no relationships to connect the higher occurrence of memory-site establishment in the years that reported multiple site counts. Of note is that, apart from the renewal of the Fishery Falls monument, no new memorials or additional designations of memory sites occurred in 2013, the year of the ASSI 150 year commemoration celebrations.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

Chapter 4 has explained the thesis methodology regarding research area, memory site selection, data collecting, recording policy and the category definitions determined for the creation of the database. By viewing the original ASSI indentured labour event as an archaeological aspect of Australian settler history, the extensive Queensland sugar growing area is the site, which allows ASSI-related memory places to be considered as a data assemblage.

Because memory is subjective and open to individual perceptions, bias and considerations of agency, the database comprises only ASSI-related memory sites of common knowledge in the public domain. These are determined through a mixed collection method, sampling local knowledge, government awareness and field work observation. The resulting database is presented in three recording formats: extended, summarised and category variables, which provide individual details and general statistics across the assemblage.

This enables the interpretive chapters which follow to use the data from all recording methods in order to understand the role of ASSI-related memory sites via their historical memory, formation processes and agency in networks of social meaning.

## CHAPTER 5: Embedded Memory - Language Based

**‘The question that concerns us now is: what is the meaning of memory in a world of experience where the rudiments of knowledge are not handed down along analogous lines of cultural transmission? A large part of the answer hinges on our understanding of language. For according to the genealogical model, it is above all thanks to language that the concepts and values of a culture are transmitted from one generation to the next. Not only does this presuppose that cultural knowledge exists in the form of a corpus of transmissible, context-free representations; it also implies that the words of language take their meanings from their attachments to these representations, quite apart from the situations of their utterance in speech’ (Ingold 2000:146).**

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explained the data collecting methodology and recording policy, and the resulting database, in three depths of detail. From individual site biographies, a summarised format was extrapolated and then further reduced to present the thesis assemblage as variable categories of data from which frequency graphs were generated. In this way a concise, readable database provides a workable means to compare and contrast the most obvious features, while also having access to site specific details for reference and interpretative discussion. Chapter 5 now begins the interpretive chapters of this thesis, taking seriously Martin’s (2013) comment that:

[the use of] object forms to classify groups, either overtly or unconsciously through the use of typology in its many archaeological manifestations, has had the unfortunate effect of perpetuating a view of culture as monoculture. The search for similarities in the archaeological record and the belief that objects only have one function and attribution means that differences in object use and affinity have been neglected and the opportunity to identify other groups within overarching cultural archetypes has been missed (Martin 2013:190).

Bearing this in mind, the interpretive chapters of the thesis draw from the assemblage for individual nuance of meaning as well as shared characteristics. Focusing on interpretation and site biographies, rather than further documenting physical attributes, the thesis now considers the ASSI-related memory sites for functional meaning in a series of comparative case studies. The overarching interpretive concern of chapter 5 is to understand how the sites operate as representatives of the ASSI past through verbal aspects of each site's articulation with public memory. This chapter aligns with issues flagged in the heritage paradox of the song of Homer, that is, the veracity of subsequent versions of narrative, or (hi)stories, and also aligns with the quadrant concept of embedded historical memory (Quadrant 1). The following focus is on the psychological aspects intentionally portrayed through linguistic and imagery choices and relationships with the existing historiography and historical discourse that were discussed in chapter 2.

## 5.2 ASSI-Related Memory Sites

For forgotten histories, such as those of the ASSI, memory sites offer physicality, a translation of the immateriality of the indenture event from times past to places present, along with the enduring historical validation this provides in the present and future.

In the end, immateriality is not something you can preserve—as in a site or behind glass in a museum—but it is something you can respect, attempt to decolonize, safeguard, and, of course, try to understand in contemporary historical and cultural context (Chilton 2012:225).

Memorials and memory sites, by their very materiality, provide intimate knowledge of how people have interacted with their physical environment and what they deemed important, representative and indicative of themselves and their communities. They involve various levels of intent, agency and effort to create a materialised form of what otherwise remains intangible: the memory of people, places, actions or experiences which in other circumstances may well pass with living memory. However, as physical constructions, the ASSI-related memory sites do not themselves remember:

[t]he material object has no faculty for memory and yet it is solid evidence of the existence and specificity of the past. Memorials therefore, are not stimulating the memories of individuals, but were made to keep, recover or to memorialise people or retrieve a shared, cultural “memory” (Kwint et al. 1999:31).

ASSI-related memory sites then, can be understood to represent Islander experiences in Australia, to *hold* information and connections to Islander pasts and to *transfer* aspects of intangible Islander pasts. In this way, as part of the 'domain of public history' ... [they can then be construed to] 'make claims for certain physical and social interpretations and renditions of historical events' (Gibson and Besley 2005:38). Some academics consider memorials to 'express the tensions, preoccupations, and sensitivity of the cultural world [and to] provide a relevant tool for making visible some stories traditionally ignored/denied' (Salerno & Zarankin 2015:92). The material world therefore offers a 'framework for remembrance, [however] 'it is the social practices in which artefacts are engaged which determines how remembrance is socially experienced and mapped out' (Jones 2007:225).

Further, as the physical presence of memorials and memory sites is not itself the immaterial quality of memory, indicative mechanisms must be relied on to communicate past (hi)stories and stimulate the interpretive perception of the viewer, and these mechanisms for the ASSI-related memory site assemblage are far from standard. With two museum collections, several buildings, public artworks of varying styles, historic trails and walls, statues, local community memorials and grave sites, the material forms and artefacts that people employ and associate with public memory of the ASSI are perhaps indicative of the contested historical background and consecutively contrasting experiences of rememberers. This is further compounded by their extended multi-locational spatial parameters and the contemporary temporal nature of

the assemblage. Added to this is the three way method of collecting the memory site data, which has resulted in an assemblage that includes both specifically built memorials and other objects that have become memory sites. Therefore, no particular archaeological methodology is engaged for interpreting the varied assemblage of ASSI-related memory sites in the following chapters. Rather, information is determined from case studies across the assemblage that compare and contrast cues such as landscape placements, form and fabric choices, narrative and imagery content, and thematic style as well as relationships to each other.

All the ASSI-related memory site variations do however, share a particular connection, which is to create meaning through the combination of semiotic and material communication. In this way they can be considered as material reminders of past Islander (hi)stories, mnemonically exclaiming their presence on the landscape and communicating within social networks. For ASSI memory sites these connections may be by intentional design or sometimes rely on inference or connotation, but all act as aids to the memory of the Islander presence in the Australian story. Aid is the keyword here, in that they always remain aids to memory, and as such, can be likened to metaphors in language, where a word or phrase is applied to an object to which it does not literally apply.

Therefore, thinking of objects and places as memory presents similar issues for effective communication as do metaphors in language where:

common ground is inherently problematic, [because] it is rarely accurate to discuss 'the meaning of' a metaphor, as if metaphors must have a single well-specified meaning. Each metaphor is interpreted in the particular communicative context in which it is encountered, and individual interpretations will not necessarily match unless the individuals' cognitive representations of the common ground are similar (Ritchie 2004:1).

Ritchie's statement about linguistic metaphors applies equally well to ASSI memory sites when 'metaphor' is replaced with 'memorial'. Memory sites, too, are ambiguous, being open to more than one interpretation, which in turn can be affected by social interactions, cultural conventions, and changes to these conditions across time and place. Much like the variations within the physical assemblage, the historically contested content and associated creative intent, as well as the further individual experiences of the viewers, become part of an interpretive mix. Therefore, to search for a universal meaning or all encompassing theory regarding ASSI-related memory sites as memory becomes untenable.

However, as Jones (2007) explains, material culture, due to its physical immediacy, can be considered to be a 'potent metaphor for the experience of memory [in that it] 'transform[s] a transient temporal phenomenon into a concrete spatial phenomenon, making it easier to comprehend' (Jones 2007:43). ASSI-related memory sites thought of as metaphors for the experience of memory, rather than as memory itself, enables a broader conversation of the ways they function to communicate intangible



experiences of the past. In this way, despite individual local differences and connections, as methods of communication grounded in the material world, each ASSI-related memory site offers vital connections to past, present and future, each of which has relationships with public memory.

### **5.3 Verbally Embedded Historical Memory**


Extending the idea of memorials as metaphors directs first a consideration of their obvious language based characteristics as a form of communication which, for this thesis, refers to Quadrant 1 elements, that is, the mental or psychological aspects of ASSI-related memorials. All of the memorials and the majority of memory sites display some form of textual inscription, from the bespoke wooden hand painted sign in the case of the Joskeleigh Historic Cemetery, to the text driven interpretive nodes on the Cairns Esplanade. As Enfield notes, 'If you want to construct a shared memory, your main tool will be language. Language is how we most readily create new states of mind in others. We use language not only to tell people things, but also to hint, persuade, coerce and cajole' (Enfield 2015:1).

The assemblage does, however, include eight memory sites without in situ signage, seven of which are heritage listed: two Islander built trails (sites 17 Mackay and 24 Yeppoon), two dry stone walls (sites 28 Mon Repos and 37 Buderim), two religious buildings (sites 23 Homebush and 25 Rockhampton), an historic burial site (site 29 Sunnyside plantation Bundaberg) and the only sugar mill remnants of the thesis (site 39 Oaklands). Spreading the length of the research area, it could be argued that built heritage such as these are physical metaphors on the landscape, that is figurative expressions of ASSI memory that communicate in their own rights. In this way they can be considered as a means of non-verbal communication, commenting on ASSI contextual history and heritage. However, as memory strategies, non-verbal

communication holds inherent the problem of communication breakdown when only those in possession of ASSI historical and locational background knowledge can comprehend the message. Therefore, such sites will hold different meanings for people with different associations, ranging from intimate, personal memory content to no recognition as a site of memory at all.

The state and local heritage listed sites, currently without on-site signage, do in fact have extensive verbal communication attached *off-site*, though their heritage listing, which includes textual discourse in the form of statements of significance, biographies and description. It is this publicly available verbal communication, along with the distinction that heritage listing denotes, that elevates these sites to ASSI-related memory places, rather than perfunctory landscape features. The unlisted site, Buderim's Islander built dry stone wall, is recognised by a local volunteer commemoration and reconciliation group as part of a collection of Indigenous and South Sea Islander historical locations, but is not formally listed by any government authority. As the data below shows, however, a comprehensively documented textual justification for its inclusion is publicly available on-line, and the wall is in fact under application for state heritage listing.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Name              | <b>37. BUDERIM KANAKA WALL ON ESCARPMENT</b> |
| Location GPS data | -26 41.12 +153 03.29                         |
| Street Address    | Church Street, Buderim, QLD.                 |
| Date Recorded     | 14/04/2016                                   |
| Place Category    | Landscape, urban                             |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Form / style / fabric   | dry stone wall remnant  |
| Designer/Builder Name   | ASSI people   |
| Dedication Date         | 2012 (application for heritage listing)   |
| Theme(s)                | ASSI cultural heritage, local history   |
| Inscription             | None  |
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>'The South Sea Islanders used surface rocks to build drystone walls and create terraces for growing food and other crops. This dry stone wall is near a large fig below St Marks church.</p> <p>The bush-covered escarpment at the rear of the BWMCA hall, Craft Cottage and St Marks is an undeveloped road reserve named Stone Street. It is a street in name only and has never been developed. It retains rock formations and native vegetation that has been removed in many other areas of the escarpment. Stone Street was nominated for the Sunshine Coast Council's heritage schedule in 2012 because of its remnant bushland, rock formations and its association with the South Sea Islander and Aboriginal camp. Terry Egemolesse visited the South Sea Islanders in Buderim in the 1940s. He recalls that not far from the present St Marks church" down the southern rocky slopes, was a small home built into a recess among the rocks. Apparently, this was the home for a number of islanders, in the early days, including the islander Jack Tanna. Tom Forsella, a Malaita man, took possession of the home, after his marriage in 1923 and lived there, until his death in 1943. His wife May (white lady) had passed away about 11 years before. His son Kingsley, born in 1930 went to the Buderim School."</p> <p>Notes and photograph retrieved from <a href="http://indigenousandssi.buderim.com/project/kanaka-wall/">(http://indigenousandssi.buderim.com/project/kanaka-wall/)</a> 14/04/2016.</p> |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Relict  |
| Access and amenities    | Accessible only through private land  |


**Figure 5.1: Buderim Kanaka Wall on Escarpment**

This demonstrates that for ASSI-related memorials and memory sites to be understood as sites of public memory, a form of language based communication needs to be involved to preserve and maintain the memory content. To the uninitiated, the 'Buderim Kanaka wall on escarpment' above for example, holds no 'memory' content as a collection of rocks on the landscape, but with its recognised historical designation and attached story, it carries meaning and memory of the extensive ASSI participation in the locale.

## 5.4 A Rose By Any Other Name ...

The ASSI-related memorials and memory sites with signage display varying levels of connection and intent which can foreground ASSI experience and influence public memory. A particular example, Yasso Point at Bowen (site 14), displays three versions of signage: a simple Koppers log sign with the words ‘Yasso Point, In Memory Of Jack & Topsy Yasso’; the more elaborate metal plaque on a stone cairn memorial with the inscription ‘Jack and Topsy, Yasso Point, Dedicated in Recognition of the work of the South Sea Islanders within the Bowen Community, 9th September 2000’; and the recently erected shelter shed and graphic display that features over five hundred words and extensive historical photographs of local South Sea Islanders’ family histories.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>14. YASSO POINT MARKER BOWEN</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -19 58.11 +148 13.52  |
| Street Address         | Queen’s Beach, Bowen 4805   |
| Date Recorded          | 08/05/2013 by JM  |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, ocean   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Wooden signposts with large golden lettering, near picnic table under a large fig tree (relevant to SSI food plantings) |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Bowen Shire Council   |
| Dedication Date        | 30/09/2000  |
| Theme(s)               | People, place marker  |
| Inscription            | YASSO POINT<br>IN MEMORY OF<br>JACK & TOPSY YASSO   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>Sourced from local knowledge at Visitor Centre</p> <p>'The idea to name the area Yasso Point was suggested following a Yasso family reunion [in 1999]... Bowen Shire Council had no hesitation in agreeing to the proposal... [and] endeavoured to coincide the event with the Queensland Government's official recognition of South Sea Islanders as a distinct group in the Queensland community' (Anthony 2000:1).</p> <p>The Koppers log sign and the memorial were unveiled by Bowen Shire Mayor Mike Brunken and Noel Yasso descendant.</p> |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Sign and surrounds conditions moderately maintained. Wood work and lettering showing signs of weathering.  |
| Access and amenities    | Transport needed, outdoor isolated location. Picnic bench and table.   |

**Figure 5.2: Yasso Point Marker, Bowen**

This indicates that public memory exists at different levels of intimacy and inclusion, catering for various audiences. In the case of the sign and memorial cairn, ASSI descendants worked with their local council to instigate the memory space and erect the memorial signage as the following excerpt from the local Bowen newspaper reports:

The idea to name the area Yasso Point was suggested following a Yasso family reunion [in 1999]... Bowen Shire Council had no hesitation in agreeing to the proposal... [and] endeavoured to coincide the event with the Queensland Government's official recognition of South Sea Islanders as a distinct group in the Queensland community. The Koppers log sign

and the memorial were unveiled by Bowen Shire Mayor Mike Brunken and Noel Yasso descendant (Anthony 2000:1).

The memory space and its naming reflect close acquaintance with the temporal and spatial aspects of the area and arose from direct communal memory. One information centre volunteer, not an ASSI descendant, mentioned as a personal comment that 'Grandpa Yasso' taught him to fish along with other local children at the end of Queens Beach, which is the site of the Yasso Point memorials. To such locals with intimate knowledge and experience of the Yasso pioneering couple Jack and Topsy, the wooden sign is sufficient to hold the particular and personal memory of the individual. The fabric, form and discourse choice also suggest an assumed knowledge, if not an intimate connection with the subjects.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>13. YASSO POINT CAIRN, BOWEN</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -19 58.05 +148 13.55   |
| Street Address         | Queen's Beach, Bowen 4805  |
| Date Recorded          | 08/05/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, ocean  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Plaque on Stone Cairn  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Bowen Shire Council  |
| Dedication Date        | 09/09/2000 (actual dedication ceremony 30/09/2000)   |
| Theme(s)               | People, local history  |
| Inscription            | JACK AND TOPSY<br>YASSO POINT<br>DEDICATED IN RECOGNITION OF THE<br>WORK OF THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS<br>WITHIN THE BOWEN COMMUNITY.<br><br>9TH SEPTEMBER 2000 |
| Notes/ Sources         | Local knowledge at Visitor Centre  |



Image



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Memorial is in good condition but surrounds overgrown with weeds |
| Access and amenities    | Transport needed, outdoor isolated location                      |

**Figure 5.3: Yasso Point Cairn, Bowen**

For the extended local community however, the stone memory cairn with its message that recognises the labour of all local South Sea Islanders, stimulates a plethora of individual memories that may or may not be connected directly to Jack and Topsy Yasso. A greater audience is now included who may be the ASSI descendants of other pioneers, or who may remember the ASSI labouring history in this district through other means, experienced or transmitted. Viewers from outside the area are also invited through the written words to realise, if not remember on a personal level, that South Sea Islanders were not only present, but active in the colonial past which established the location.

The Yasso Point shelter shed and information board outlines the history of the local South Sea Islander people in much more detail, and highlights Jack and Topsy Yasso as two of the original South Sea Islanders to arrive in the area to work on local farms. However, the pictorial info-graphic style and written discourse imparts an educational, historical tone, at once removed

temporally, and personally from the story, and therefore also from the memory. Referring to the ASSI subjects as well as the actual shed in the third person, the dialogue is at once inclusive of the reader while removed from the memory with sentences such as ‘this shelter shed and graphic display acknowledges the South Sea Islanders contribution to the Bowen Community’, ‘North Queensland Bulk Ports sponsored this project’ and ‘the shelter and information board complement the restoration work recently carried out to preserve the area’ (NQBP 2015).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>15. YASSO POINT SHELTER AND HISTORY BOARD, BOWEN</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -19 58.08 +148 13.54   |
| Street Address         | Queens Beach, northern end, Bowen.   |
| Date Recorded          | 27/02/2016   |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, ocean  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Shelter shed, history board, metal.  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | North Queensland Bulk Ports  |
| Dedication Date        | April 2015   |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, people, local history  |
| Inscription            | <p>Australian South Sea Islanders</p> <p>Background:</p> <p>South Sea Islanders refers to the descendants of people brought from islands in the Western Pacific to work as indentured labourers on the coastal farms of Queensland in the mid-late 1800s and early 1900s. The Islanders came mainly from Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides), Solomon Islands, Melanesia and Loyalty Islands. Some of the Islanders were kidnapped, coerced or ‘blackbirded’ into indentured service for white farmers. This practice lasted until 1906-08 when the majority of the Islanders were repatriated through Government legislation. However, those exempted or who evaded repatriation, are now the direct ancestors of current Australian South Sea Islanders. While</p> |

in earlier times the Islander labourers were referred to as 'Kanakas', which means 'man', their descendants now consider this term as a reminder of their ancestors' exploitation. Official recognition of this disadvantaged, minority group of Australian South Sea Islanders was made by the Commonwealth Government in 1994.

Today Australian South Sea Islanders are a diverse group who have intermarried with Indigenous Australians, Torres Strait Islanders and into the broader white community.

Yasso Point

Yasso Point was named in honour of Jack and Topsy Yasso well-known local residents.

Jack and Topsy Yasso were born in Bowen - Jack in 1880 and Topsy in 1881. Both their fathers came from Tanna island in the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) as indentured labour. Jack's mother, Mary Romud, was also from the South Sea Islands. Topsy's mother was an Aboriginal lady by the name of Louise who belonged to a local clan group in the Bowen area.

Jack Yasso worked on farms in the Bowen area for the Hall Scott family and also for Harry Lott a mango farmer. At a young age, Topsy was taken from Bowen and reared by a European family. Later she returned and worked as a domestic for the DuBurg Anderson family who owed the Bank in Bowen. It was during this time Topsy met Jack and they married. The couple lived in a house at the end of Gloucester Street in Queens Beach for many years. Jack and Topsy produced 11 children. They became a highly respected couple who upheld strong Christian beliefs.

Jack is remembered as an expert on the local environment through his exploration of the local creeks, beaches and land to source sea food and other treats for his family. He passed this knowledge on to his children and grandchildren by taking them on many fishing and camping trips to the Don River, Bob Moses, Bow Creeks and Rainbow Hole as well as conducting trips into the bush nearby. Topsy Yasso was a devoted mother and grandmother who welcomed all to her modest home. Topsy passed away on 9 September 1959 while Jack passed away on 18 January 1963.

The descendants of Jack and Topsy are numerous with many residing in the Bowen area. Many of Jack and Topsy's grandchildren and great-grandchildren have fond memories of family activities at Yasso Point.

This shelter shed and graphic display acknowledges the South Sea Islanders contribution to the Bowen Community North Queensland Bulk Ports sponsored this project.

Notes/ Sources

Image



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Good. Maintained by council.                       |
| Access and amenities    | Private transport necessary, picnic tables nearby. |

**Figure 5.4: Yasso Point Shelter And History Board, Bowen**

Although referring to the same general location and obviously picking up on local history, the different pedigree of, and underlying purpose to, the sign and cairn is obvious. Sponsored and funded 15 years later by North Queensland Bulk Ports (NQBP), a government owned corporation that oversees several ports in north Queensland, the shelter was designed as part of a restoration project driven by the government run Don River Improvement Trust. At the official opening NQBP's CEO Steve Lewis said:

What we're (the community) doing here is collectively passing on history. It's really important to appreciate (the history) and it's a great opportunity to continue to build on this and make Yasso Point a place where people visit when in Bowen (NQBP 2015).

In both the written and spoken discourse, Jack and Topsy Yasso become 'history' rather than people, and their lives, efforts and meaning to the community become a 'passed' point in a local area trajectory that has moved on without them. The remembrance is now less focused on the people themselves, but more concerned with the locational history of the place.

There is not personal memory from the creators of this information board, and the connection with the local community appears manufactured rather than remembered. Perhaps the 'memory' of the government corporations involved is a pervasive motivation for the structure. However, for viewers with little or no knowledge of the history behind the naming of Yasso Point, the information board presents a de facto, potted (hi)story, which will instruct public memory as people with direct memory connections pass and population flows into the area from other locations. In this way memorials influence the present and future creation of public memory. The Yasso Point case study illustrates that, although all three memorials construct a version of the same past thematically, different perspectives are transmitted through the particular information styles. Also, that the form of these styles are determined in part by their 'position of technology within society' (Pasztor 2005:4).

The ASSI memorials therefore can be seen to speak through their embedded historical narratives to the Song of Homer Paradox. As discussed in chapter 2, here again the memorials unite members of the audience who know the

words. Different stakeholders of the same history will remember differently based on their experiences and connections to the event. Public memory of the ASSI then, is not simply a verifiable quantity that is added to as time passes, but a collection of diverse views and versions. The different memorial versions are, however, as sites of memory, similar social constructions that not only represent, but also create different meanings for creators and viewers alike. These differences in song affect the specific identity and character of the area as people perceive and retain those components which have value in their particular place and time. Increasingly however, it involves those who have no first hand connections to the sites and (hi)stories, as well as those who do.

## 5.5 Weighty Words

Continuing to view the ASSI-related memorials from a verbal perspective across the assemblage shows that generally the narrative accounts of the past represented on memorials are peppered with particular, weighted keywords. Word choices can make a difference to the content and efficacy of any communication. Indeed, 'psychological research shows that the words we choose to describe a scene can create different memories of that scene, and therefore affect our beliefs about what happened [and even create] false memories' (Enfield 2015:1).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>35. MARYBOROUGH KANAKA MEMORIAL</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -25 32.28 +152 42.34   |
| Street Address         | Richmond Street, Mary River Parklands, Maryborough                                   |
| Date Recorded          | 01/03/2016   |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, river, central   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Split marble boulders with bronze symbols  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Sue McLean and Trevor Spohr (artists) for Council per Regional Arts Development Fund |
| Dedication Date        | 2006   |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, local history, public art                                    |

Inscription



**SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS IN MARYBOROUGH**

**History:**

1863 indentured labour introduced into Queensland.

1867 on 9 November the first labour vessel "Mary Smith" arrived at the Port of Maryborough with 84 Kanakas.

Complaints about ill treatment and work conditions resulted in strikes as early as February 1868. Ongoing problems and high death rates led to a Royal Commission.

1875 At Maryborough 378 Islanders die in measles epidemic.

1880 Colonial Secretary Enquiry in Maryborough District and revision of Pacific Island Labourers Act.

1883-1888 Polynesian hospital operated specifically for Islanders.

1884 Royal Commission into recruiting practices in New Guinea.

Between 1867 and 1903 a total of 32 vessels continued to carry a total of 12,073 South Sea Islanders, of which 686 were women.

South Sea Islanders contributed greatly to Maryborough's economy, earning a reputation of hard workers, especially in the sugar industry.

1901 Federation of Australia brought with it the White Australia Policy and the abolition of indentured labour (often called black birding or slavery).

1903 on 20 October the last vessel "Sydney Belle" arrived with 129 Kanakas.

1906 Qld Royal Commission into forced repatriation allows more Islanders to stay under special conditions. Many were deported and approximately 1,600 were allowed to stay under special conditions.

**Today :**

South Sea Islanders descendants continue to live and work in the region. Their culture remains strong and they continue to maintain links with their islands of origins. The monument is a recognition of the hard work and the sacrifices our ancestors endured.

**THE MARYBOROUGH KANAKA MEMORIAL**

The tragedies and prosperity that the trade in human cargo brought to our shores commands a powerful place in our history. Kanakas landing in Maryborough came from 3 South Pacific island groups, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Kanakas walking from the black-birding ships moored at the wharf on the river below passed this place on their way to be registered at the Maryborough Customs House.

These black marble boulders were taken from the ancient sea site at Chillagoe in north west Queensland. The sea that eroded the boulders also lapped the shores of the islands from where the Kanakas came.



The boulders are split as were the lives and families of these people. Symbols of their lands and culture were chosen by their descendants and cast in bronze. Placed in the heart of the rocks, these important images celebrate the places from where they came, the cultures they left behind and the enrichment of our lives today.

This tribute is a cooperative project between Maryborough City Council and Daralata Australian South Sea Islander Association representing the the South Sea Islander groups.

The concept was developed by artists Sue McLean and Trevor Spohr in consultation with the Daralata Australian South Sea Islander Association. The rocks were found by Sue McLean. The bronzes were modelled in clay by Trevor Spohr and cast by Matilda Foundry.

#### SYMBOLS ON THE MEMORIAL:

Solomon Islands

Nuzu Nuzu

A powerful spiritual messenger

A helper for paddling canoes

Provides safe travel over water

The Dove

Represents peace

New Caledonia

Fleche Fatiere Home of Ancestral Spirits

Conch Shells Voice of Ancestors

Spear Points Protection from bad spirits

Vanuatu

The Pig's tusk and the Namele leaf represent

Prosperity and peace respectively.

#### Notes/ Sources

MA Themed Culture, sub-themed Community

Photographs by D.Watson 15/12/2014 from

<http://monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/culture/community/display/104181-kanaka-memorial->

#### Frasercoast Council Description:

This memorial is a tribute to all Kanakas brought to Queensland to work on cane and cotton plantations. Between 1863 and 1906, an estimated 50,000 Islanders were brought to Queensland. About 12,000 of these were brought to the Maryborough/Hervey Bay area.

<http://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/parks-and-gardens> – search for “Mary River Parklands - Kanaka Memorial”.

Image



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | No (MA image)  |
| Current condition       | Good. Well maintained by council.                      |
| Access and amenities    | Street access, wheelchair access, public conveniences. |

**Figure 5.5: Maryborough Kanaka Memorial**

Terminologies appearing in ASSI memorial inscription texts follow the trend found in the historiography and related literatures discussed in chapter 2, that is, inclusive of hegemonic and racially derogatory language. This is despite the predominance of post-colonial era signage and an intent to include Islanders in the public audience who may find such language offensive. However, the use of these words is often indicative of a more sophisticated intent. Instead of the colonial era derisive meaning, the words are sometimes used in texts to highlight and expose this past in an illustrative fashion. In others, the usage shows a surprising level of naivety where a derogatory term is seemingly used without knowledge of its social context or its changed connotations over time, such as in street signs. The use of the word Kanaka is a prime example, since it 'is no longer acceptable in Australia for general

use (Moore:2015:156). Making an appearance in 43% (18) of the 42 ASSI memorials sampled, the word appeared most frequently in the interpretive text in three ways:

1. As a direct reference to ASSI people, as in '(t)his memorial is a tribute to all Kanakas brought to Queensland to work on cane and cotton plantations' (site 35 Maryborough).
2. As part of historical references, as in 'The labour schooner Northern Belle ... brings 94 kanaka boys and 14 women' (site 6 Fishery Falls).
3. An explanatory item, as in the Yasso Point shelter and history board: 'While in earlier times the Islander labourers were referred to as "Kanakas", which means "man", their descendants now consider this term as a reminder of their ancestors' exploitation' (site 15).

In several instances the actual memorial title contains the word Kanaka, as in Childers' 'Isis Kanaka Story' memorials, and in road signage that directs visitors to the 'Kanaka Memorial' as seen in the John Thompson memorial at Childers and the Point Vernon Cemetery (figure 5.6).



**Figure 5.6: Point Vernon Cemetery signpost (Author's photo 23 October 2013)**

In some instances, the interpretive texts use the term Kanaka as standard vernacular, seemingly oblivious to its etymological history and associated hegemonic tone. The Australian Sugar Heritage Centre's on-line information contains the following description of their ASSI display:



South Seas Islander labourers (Kanakas)

Part of the Refined White exhibition (sic) is on display. Explains the history of indentured labour and the contribution that South Seas Islanders (Kanakas) [made] to the development of the Sugar Industry in Australia.

Explains the change to policies of the Federal Government which lead to the deportation of kanakas back to their island homes. (Australian Sugar Heritage Centre 2016).

The word Kanakas is used in each of the three sentences, seemingly to clarify who the South Sea Islanders are. That the heritage centre began its existence as the Australian Sugar Industry Museum, perhaps goes some way to explain the apparent narrative slant towards the Islanders as a labouring commodity in the industrial development in Australia. Of interest however, is that the ASSI contingent are separated from the other people and history of the Australian sugar story; those who 'pioneered' and 'made [the Australian sugar industry] happen', as follows :



The pioneers of the Australian Sugar Industry

Photos and stories of the men and women who pioneered the establishment of the sugar industry in Australia.

Covers the creation of large sugar milling companies and the people who made it all happen. (Australian Sugar Heritage Centre 2016).

The accompanying photographs too, support the hegemonic tone of the text, displaying a marked difference between the solitary stationary Islander and the contrastingly active camaraderie of the vibrant achieving band of enthusiastic European workers. Consumers of historical presentations on text boards such as these are unwittingly conditioned by the lingua franca, to remember the ASSI people by the term Kanakas, and to conjure a mental image complete with absorbed emotive cues suggested by the visual images.


This example serves to illustrate how psychological and experiential concepts of the ASSI past are represented through the visual cues of memorial texts and graphical representations. It is unlikely that the museum curators intend to present a story of bias by portraying the Islanders as other than colonial era pioneers of the country. Regardless of recruitment backgrounds, the ASSI were technically amongst the first to settle and establish the sugar areas. Rather, these images and words, perhaps unwittingly, buy into the contestation surrounding Islander pasts and their agency within those pasts as '[t]he words "Kanaka" and "Blackbirding" [still] resonate with Australians' (Moore 2015:156).

## 5.6 Historical Photographs

Operating visually in this way then, in addition to the verbal content, memory strategies for recent histories are able to include the use of photographic images which also speak to a sense of narrative history. However, only five memory places from the assemblage include actual historic ASSI photographs to support the on-site texts.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>6. NORTH QUEENSLAND ASSI FISHERY FALLS MONUMENT</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -17 11.11 +145 53.25  |
| Street Address         | Bruce Highway & McMahon Drive Fishery Falls   |
| Date Recorded          | 26/08/2013 by JM  |
| Place Category         | Landscape, roadside   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal plaque on cement plinth<br>Inscribed interpretive information regards ASSI history in north Queensland comprises brief explanation of original arrivals supported by illustrative shipping map, two historical newspaper articles and three historical photographs from the Cairns Historical Society collection. These show South Sea Islander women chipping weeds, Queensland 1890 and two labour ship arrivals. |
| Designer/ Builder Name | 150th South Sea Islander Commemoration Celebrations Committee; Suzanne Gibson, historian; Tim Parker, Pembroke Graphics; Cairns Regional Council (Lesley Buckley CRC Cultural Planner). The project was fully funded by Council.  |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Dedication Date   | 1998 restored 2013 (for SSI 150 years commemoration)  |
|   | <p>The project was initiated when members of the South Sea Islander Community advised Council that the signage was in need of repair.</p> <p>From correspondence located in Council's archives it seems that the plaque/monument which is located on a Road Reserve on the highway at Fishery Falls was originally installed as part of a broader Bellenden Ker Historical Trail in 1998.</p> <p>Although the plaque was faded to such a degree that it was difficult to read, it could be seen to observe Kanaka blackbirding history of the region. Unfortunately as the original conceptual design, text and images could not be located, it was necessary for us to reinterpret a historic context for a new panel.</p> <p>Suzanne Gibson, historian with Converge, Cultural Heritage Consultants was engaged to consult with representatives of the South Sea Islander community and Traditional Owners to seek advice re the possible significance of the site, as well as appropriate historic content for the new interpretive panel.</p> <p>The design component was undertaken by Tim Parker, Pembroke Graphics.</p> <p>Project Management was undertaken by Lesley Buckley, CRC Cultural Planner, Cairns Regional Council.</p> |
| Theme(s)  | ASSI cultural heritage, local history   |
| Inscription   | South Sea Islanders in North Queensland   |
|  | <p>This site honours the men, women and children of the South Sea Islands who worked throughout the cane fields of North Queensland, including those around you now.</p> <p><i>The labour schooner Northern Belle arrive in the Inlet on Saturday after a four months' cruise amongst the South Sea Islands. She brings 94 kanaka boys and 14 women, all being for the Pyramid Plantation. They came, as usual, under a three years engagement: those who have been on sugar plantations before getting £12 per annum and the others £6 and £9.</i></p> <p>Cairns Post, 7 Nov 1888</p> <p>Australian South Sea Islanders acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which this memorial stands, the Wanyurr Majay Yidinji. Many in our community are now part of Aboriginal families and we pay tribute to the Elders, past and present.</p> <p>Between 1860 and 1904, South Sea Islanders were brought to Queensland as cheap labour for the sugar industry. Over 60,000 were recruited from the island groups of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Kiribati and Tuvalu.</p> <p>The human trade of South Sea Islanders to Queensland was</p>  |



|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Notes/ Sources | <p>commonly known as <i>blackbirding</i>. This colonial trade was notorious for false promises, trickery and even kidnap, as means of recruiting young islanders.</p> <p>In Queensland, South Sea Islanders did the backbreaking work of planting, maintaining and harvesting sugar cane. They worked long hours for low or no wages while living in very poor conditions. Many were treated like slaves. To survive and stay strong, Islanders grew taro and yam and went hunting and fishing, according to custom.</p> <p>In 1901 the Australian government began deporting South Sea Islanders, under the White Australia Policy. South Sea Islanders who had started new lives and begun families in Australia protested, and eventually the law was amended to allow some to stay.</p> <p>The descendants of these men, women and children are Australian South Sea Islanders. We pay tribute to the hard work and endurance of their ancestors who chose to make Australia their home.</p> <p><i>We would draw attention to the somewhat startling complaint made by a number of Kanakas to the Commissioners when at Port Douglas to the effect that they had even deprived of eighteen months' wages. We have on more than one occasion pointed out the injustice done to South Sea Islanders by the practice in vogue on some plantations of not complying with Clause 21 of the Labourers' (Polynesian) Act. Cairns Post, 19 Jan 1889</i></p> <p>Cairns Regional Council (Logo)</p> <p>MA Themed Culture, sub-themed Community</p> <p>Cairns South Sea Island Committee published photographs of this monument on their Facebook site showing the community gathering to reveal and renew this monument as part of the 150 years celebration on the 25th August 2013. Their update read:</p> <p>Far North Queensland ASSI Fishery Falls Monument Revealing</p> <p>Renewing of the Monument Traditional Owners the Mow family and ASSI descendants came together with ASSI families and had the privileged of the cutting of the ribbon. Sharing with us their family history/songs and stories Descendants from Moe Island. Remembering our ancestors been kidnapped and stolen to work very hard in the cane fields in Far North Queensland.</p> <p>When families are traveling to Cairns Please stop in and check it out. You cannot miss it you will see it from the highway before the Pub in Fishery Falls.</p> |
|----------------|--|

Image



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | No                                     |
| Current condition       | Good condition, maintained by council. |
| Access and amenities    | Transport necessary.                   |

**Figure 5.7: North Queensland ASSI Fishery Falls Monument**

This low inclusion rate of photographic images is perhaps surprising as the historical photographs of South Sea Islanders taken during the indenture years number in the hundreds, taken by professional and amateur photographers for a variety of purposes. They are scattered throughout public and private collections and include ‘etchings in newspapers, journals, commemorative books (some of which are based on photographs), cartoons, and actual photographic reproductions’ (Moore 2009:9). This suggests that either the content, that is the photographs themselves, or the context, that is the agency, technology and situational details of memory sites, do not support the inclusion of historical photographs at this time.

A further consideration for the paucity of historical photographs at ASSI-related memory sites may be related to the complex extraneous melange of contextual background information they contain which may detract from the underlying message of a relatively simple place marker, or particular local history memorial. For example, historical ASSI photographs can complicate a

memory message due to the nature of the photographs' generation, that is, being composed and taken almost exclusively by white colonial people, which presents unavoidable issues of cultural bias, motive, and intention.



**Figure 5.8:** 1880 SSI *Specimens mixed* (State Library of Queensland, Brandon album, ID 6298-0001-0020)

Although photographs may appear candid, real and believable, as Edwards points out:

... photographic inscription is not unmediated; the photograph is culturally circumscribed by ideas of what is significant or relevant at any given time, in any given context ... hence, as in any primary historical document, the inscription itself becomes the first act of interpretation (Edwards 2001:9).

Also, any viewing of historical photographs by a contemporary audience contains modern understandings and interpretations that are 'specific to a discourse of consumption, [with] meanings [that] are not necessarily in the photos themselves, but in their suggestive appearances within different contexts, as people and things decontextualised within them are transposed within the culture viewing' (Edwards 2001:8).

On-line texts do tend more often to include this particular form of imagery, perhaps as the three dimensional aspects of material objects is necessarily unavailable on this platform. Also, where historical photographs are included, such as in the collection format of Joskeleigh ASSI Museum and the Mourilyan Sugar Heritage Centre, the images provide a significant component of their display.



**Figure 5.9: Gordonvale mosaic (Author's photo 21 June 2016)**

A more tactile means to include imagery appears in an additional five memorials which feature stylised images of ASSI people, typically depicted labouring as cane cutters, or as passengers in longboats, both of which refer to the original indenture event and associated lack of personal agency. These are produced as ceramic tiles, metal engravings, or mosaic illustrations. Two memorials, at Mackay and Point Vernon take this imagery further, with life size models of ASSI cane cutters. This tactile style of memorial speaks to Jones' (2007) conception of remembrance as 'a dialogue in which objects impress themselves perceptually and sensually upon humans as much as humans impress themselves upon objects' (Jones 2007:26). This concept applies to the memory object's creators and consumers alike, and is touched upon further in ensuing chapters.



## 5.7 Memorials as Idealised Histories (Positive and Negative)

One of the hand crafted ceramic tile images is part of an extensive community memorial along the banks of the Johnstone River in Innisfail (Site 7). This particular memory object tells an ASSI story that is quite opposite to the majority of the thesis assemblage.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>7. 'RIVER REFLECTIONS' MOSAIC PANELS - INNISFAIL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | - 17 31.35 +146 01.92  |
| Street Address         | Fitzgerald Esplanade, Innisfail 4860   |
| Date Recorded          | 08/07/2010 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, river  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Mosaic sculpture of clay tiles, terrazzo, inlaid glass, brass and bronze   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Sam Di Mauro   |
| Dedication Date        | 1999   |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, community, cultural heritage  |
| Inscription            | <p>(Inscription on panel 2 which is relevant to remembering ASSI)</p> <p>2. EARLY EUROPEAN MIGRATION<br/>RIVER DETAIL: COQUETTE POINT. THE MOUTH OF JOHNSTONE RIVER</p> <p>TOP: CATHOLIC NUNS ... EARLY 'LANDLORDS'.<br/>FIRST CANECUTTER'S BARRACKS (TENTS).</p> <p>MIDDLE: SOUTH JOHNSTONE MILL 1920's.<br/>CATHOLIC CHURCH AND LAND OWNERSHIP.</p> <p>BOTTOM: SOUTH SEA ISLANDER CEREMONIAL MASK.<br/>'PLEASE TAKE ME TOO'. KANAKA BY CHOICE...<br/>GEORGE ANTE.<br/>CHINESE BANANA SETTLERS(sic)ON THE RIVER IN 1906.<br/>CATHOLIC CHURCH AND LAND OWNERSHIP (CONT.).<br/>EUROPEAN MIGRANT FARMERS (GIUSEPPE MARANO &amp; FAMILY 1922).<br/>IRISH HARP. SYMBOL OF IRISH MIGRATION.</p> |

Notes/ Sources

A series of 8 panels along the Johnstone River, depicting Innisfail community's cultural history based on consultation with local people's oral histories.  
MA Themed Landscape, sub-themed Settlement

Image



Heritage Status Listing

No

Current condition

Good condition in council maintained public park

Access and amenities

Central town location with disabled access and public conveniences nearby

**Figure 5.10: 'River Reflections' mosaic panels - Innisfail**

The memorial is 'River Reflections', an eight panel mosaic set into the coping wall that addresses themes of the multicultural migration and settlement history of the area. Inscribed in the bronze interpretive plaque for the ASSI portion are the words *"Please take me too". Kanaka by choice*'. The accompanying image, hand crafted and glazed on a ceramic tile shows a person emerging from the palm fringed waters edge, waving toward a crowded longboat of passengers.



**Figure 5.11: 'Take Me Too' tile and plaque (Author's photo 18 February 2014)**

The words and the image, taken alone or together, show an unmistakable willingness, if not urgency to be included in the diaspora moving away from the island. Further, the words 'Kanakas by choice' open a whole new dialogue surrounding the concept of any person choosing to be identified by a cultural label which contains such connotations of hardship, second class citizenship and associated derogatory implications. Also, the use of a word that has actively been called out as offensive by members of the descendant community, has the effect of whitewashing the negative undertones discussed previously in this thesis.

This presentation prompts consideration of the concept of ASSI memorials as material representation of 'idealised histories' (Rubertone 2008:24). In light of the ongoing contestation surrounding recruitment details and differing experiences of people involved in the ASSI event, the image of Islanders clamouring happily to join their indentured compatriots is perhaps the most ideal. Where agency is removed from the Islanders in alternative (hi)stories



of trickery, black birding and slavery, this one image and few words turn the tale on its head and portray the Islander labourers as voluntary participants.

Of the 14 memory sites that include recruitment (hi)stories in their narratives, this is the only memorial to adopt a position of apparent Islander agency. Five memorial inscriptions take the opposite position, using vocabulary such as 'black birding', 'kidnapping', and 'slaves' and also refer to the Islanders as 'kanakas' (sites 6, 22, 31, 35, 42). The Childers memorial totems (site 31) presents a stark comparison to the positively idealised scene portrayed in the River Reflections ceramic tile with another etched image of an island recruiting scene.



**Figure 5.12: Childers Memorial Totem metal engraving**  
(Author's photo 23 October 2013)

Engraved in metal this time, and sporting a similar artistic style of a longboat on a Pacific shore, this alternative trope shows an undressed indigenous

group apparently interested in what the two clothed, hat wearing Europeans have on offer (see figure 5.12). There is no apparent clamouring and the supporting text makes clear the illustrative intent:

Once [convict] transportation stopped,  
landowners sent ships to the  
South Sea Islands to obtain  
labour. Men, women, boys and  
girls were lured onto ships, or  
kidnapped from the beaches.  
Conditions on board during the  
long journey were poor - the  
Kanakas were poorly fed, had no  
medical treatment, poor toilet  
facilities, and many women and  
girls were raped.

The image and terminology are used quite differently and reinforce the unfortunate treatment of the Islanders.

Another memorial inscription, the interpretive text supporting The Mackay Family Trees Plantings (Site 22), uses words to illustrate their memory position 'The Forgotten People: The first South Sea Islanders ('Kanakas') were "blackbirded" (i.e. cruelly kidnapped & brought in chains), to Mackay, in May 1867'. There is no room for misinterpretation and the contrast between the ASSI pasts represented in these two memorial styles is dramatic.



**Figure 5.13: Forgotten People monument, Mackay (Author's photo 8 May 2013)**

In fact both the Innisfail, and Mackay representations are based on individual experiences passed down in Islander family histories, and in both cases created by the individuals' descendants. The first is based on the artist's forebear:

Lily Hart's great grandfather George Ante was not actually "blackbirded." He was in Fiji looking to for (sic) work to buy an organ for the Church at home. He saw a boat load of Solomon Islanders, sneaked in amongst them - and landed in Australia (Bingil Bay Bulletin 2006:6).

The second is a joint effort, again based on the oral histories of local Islander families who participated in the memorial's creation. In this case the comprehensive interpretive board supports living memorials in the form of the



(e)xtensive planting of 33 coconut palms and fruit trees used in the Pacific Islands representing 'community trees for each family within the Island community'. Supported by large metal embossed interpretive guide to locations and variety of tree, and South Sea Islander family represented, also metal engraved leaf-shaped plaque set into stone boulder base, both housed under Island stylised wooden roof structure (Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens 2016).

This creates a particularly personal past with the living trees as memorials planted in communal public space and involving a tree-naming community arts project.



**Figure 5.14: Interpretive Tree Guide, Mackay (Author's photo 8 May 2013)**

The eight other memorials to address recruitment disparities are more non committal, using words such as 'recruited', 'contracted', 'imported', 'brought in ships', and the open-ended 'some were coerced' (sites 3, 11, 12, 15, 18,

33, 34, and 38). Of these, six refer to the Islanders as kanakas (sites 3, 11, 15, 33, 34, and 38), while the remaining two (sites 12 and 18), use the term 'black birded'. The use of content laden terminologies such as these indicates an awareness of, and desire to communicate, the underlying inequalities without entering the contestation by taking a particular stance. Although there appears to be no apparent spatial or chronological connection between these memorials, they all had primary input from local councils or community groups other than Islander descendants; in two cases religious groups (sites 33 and 38), and one philanthropic group, the 'One People of Australia League' (OPAL) were responsible (site 34). The OPAL memorial at Polson Cemetery in Hervey Bay deserves particular note because, although the inscription itself contains no contentious words and refers to 'South Sea Islanders', the council description and in situ sign posting does refer to 'Kanakas'.

South Sea Islander Memorial Inscription:

To the Memory of  
all South Sea Islanders  
brought to Queensland  
as conscript labourers  
to work in cotton and  
sugar cane fields  
1863 - 1906  
May their toil be not forgotten.  
Erected by Hervey Bay  
O.P.A.L. (One People of Australia League)

However, the supporting signage at the cemetery takes a middle of the road position, pointing to both a South Sea Islander and Kanaka memorial, in case there is any confusion.



**Figure 5.15: Polson Cemetery, Point Vernon (Author's photo 23 October 2013)**

Frasercoast Regional Council's web-page also describes the memorial as:

Located in the Polson Cemetery this memorial is a tribute to all Kanakas brought to Queensland to work on cane and cotton plantations.

Between 1863 and 1906, an estimated 50,000 Islanders were brought to Queensland. About 12,000 of these were brought to the Maryborough/Hervey Bay area. (Fraser Coast Regional Council, retrieved 22nd August 2016 from [frasercoast.qld.gov.au](http://frasercoast.qld.gov.au)).

Several memorial texts attempt to deal with the contested recruitment history by acknowledging its existence while stopping short of extending this scenario to include all Islander recruits, instead using words such as ‘many’, ‘the first’, ‘some’ and ‘supposedly’. In this way, the contentious aspects of the past are addressed without alienating present day descendants with offensive labels. Take for example the following two inscription texts which read in part:

*Many* islanders were taken when they attempted to trade with the visiting ships, or were enticed on board from fishing canoes. (In 1872, the Pacific Islander Protection Act outlawed these kidnapping practices) (site 42 Cudgen Burial Ground Memorial 1999).

*Some* of the Islanders were kidnapped, coerced or ‘blackbirded’ into indentured service for white farmers. This practice lasted until 1906-08 when the majority of the Islanders were repatriated through Government legislation (site 15 Yasso Point shelter).

Both texts include the contentious aspects employed by members of the European recruiting ships, but both texts also counter this with the consequent Government legislations that deal with these practices. Ostensibly, although both the ‘black-birding’ and the legislative measures paint the Islanders as impotent of agency in either their comings or goings, the hegemonic colonial Europeans are not left without conscience (eventually). As described in chapter 1, the 1872 Pacific Islander Protection Act was only one in a string of acts which culminated in the 1906-8 repatriation order designed to support the White Australia Policy by replacing

Islanders with European labourers. So, even where efforts are made to include multiple aspects of contentious histories, exclusions as much as inclusions continue to colour the narrative. A third memorial text hints at this historical narrational inconsistency:

The First South Sea Islanders ('Kanakas') were "blackbirded" (ie. cruelly kidnapped & brought in chains), to Mackay, in May, 1867. Passage masters then ventured throughout the Melanesian Islands, enticing thousands more potential plantation labourers to the work of clearing land for the birthing of Queensland's sugar industry. After the first few years an official recruitment policy supposedly reduced the kidnapping and many recruits came as voluntary workers. (site 22 The Forgotten People - SSI family trees planting Mackay 1996).

Going some way to indicate that the problems associated with recruitment were not instantly fixed with Government legislation, this memorial demonstrates the ability of one word to completely alter the take home message of the same story.

These ASSI memorial inscriptions show that the historical narrative used within memorial inscriptions and about ASSI memory places do more than represent an ASSI past. According to cognitive psychologist David Rapp, "When people think about the issues, they draw upon all the knowledge they have [which] gets mixed up in their heads, [so] people are bad at remembering from where they got the information, making it tricky to separate fiction from reality' (Rapp 2013:1). In this way, through the various expressions of localised histories, certain psychological aspects of ASSI



pasts and identities are reified through historical discourse and etched as material representations of idealised histories, both positive and negative, which then have an effect on the ways that people think and talk about the ASSI event.

A primary function of ASSI memorials then, intentionally employs the linguistic symbols and verbal and imagery cues embedded in the material framework to support the communication of a particular version of the past. This historical memory represents versions which may ignore alternative views or histories. In this way, memorials function to make the memory of the ASSI past real, that is to reframe local histories as inclusive of particular ASSI characteristics. Although these versions of the past are not homologous, an ASSI past of extended connection to local place, supporting an Australian South Sea Islander cultural heritage, is the dominant representation.

In this way, ASSI memorials can be seen to function through verbal means to justify versions of the past by bringing them into the public sphere as citable evidence to support particular claims. Extra narrative imagery may also be employed to illustrate and add weight to positions in the form of photographic or characteristic representations.

An individual may remember and forget what he or she likes, but once a version of past events is accepted and shared by a group, as a collective construction, it is on public record. It is not just a memory but a citable memory. Citable memories are versions of events that we can point to when we want to justify our versions of what happened, of who we were,

or want to be. They can be given as reasons for action. And they can give us something to scrutinise. A public version of events gives us, among much else, a point of reference against which people may be held accountable for their roles in what happened (Enfield 2015).

For ASSI memory places, then, the use of key words and images are able to communicate on conscious and pre-conscious levels to different audiences. In effect, they are operating at the level of cognitive awareness as well as emotively, that is, at a more dimly aware intuitive level. The images of Islander recruits in long boats identified previously in this chapter reinforce this point. Taken in tandem with the associated key words, these situational portrayals are used to support two opposing versions of the ASSI past, and so embody the binary opposites of the contestation surrounding the indenture event. These claims can be seen in this way to represent an assertion of hegemonic power, or the reclaiming by minority stakeholders of alternative (hi)stories. Through ASSI memory places differing versions of group identity claims are emphasised and reinforced in the public forum, impinging the accepted historical and cultural heritage narrative.

## 5.8 Conclusion

Chapter 5 has demonstrated that the embedded verbal information attached to ASSI-related memory places functions to transfer particular versions of the past. In effect, operating to construct, reframe or support existing local histories, the linguistic qualities of memorials bring representations of the past to the public awareness. Including the narrative values of photographic and created imagery to support these claims, the symbolic representation of script and the chronological effects of story telling are able to present a contested, shared past that is represented through opposing messages.

Put simply, a set of ten facts may be capable of sustaining a variety of meanings depending up how they are narrativised and interpreted. The facts of a long-lost past do not speak for themselves. Though the archive is rich, it is patchy in parts and full of lacunae. If we can't know all the facts, how can we know the whole truth? (Kremmer 2016:1).

In this way the verbal communication attached to memory sites plays a crucial role in transmitting versions of the past, which affect future public memory. ASSI-related sites of memory all have some form of textual support, either in the form of on-site or off-site narrative, in order to function as sites of public memory. This echoes the Homer paradox, in that the same words can hold different meanings for different viewers. However, for these (hi)stories to be readily available to the general public, it is the material format of their memory spaces that serve to anchor, and hold them in place through time. It is to other cognitive material aspects of memory are discussed next.

## CHAPTER 6: Entangled Memory - Cognitive Meaning

**'It would be a mistake to conceive of the psychical and the physical aspects of matter as two aspects absolutely distinct. Viewing a thing from the outside, considering its relations of action and reaction with other things, it appears as matter. Viewing it from the inside, looking at its immediate character as feeling, it appears as consciousness' (Peirce 1992 [1892]:349 in Martin 2013:67).**

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the ASSI-related memory sites for aspects of non-verbal articulation with public memory through relational aspects of landscape placement. This provides information regarding the social construction of the memory of ASSI pasts, particularly when this is complicit in other (post)colonial histories of industry and settlement. Discussed via selected case studies, this chapter aligns with the ship of Theseus paradox discussed in chapter 2, that is, the survival and identity of memory sites through gradual change. This chapter also aligns with the quadrant concept of entangled formation processes (Quadrant 2). Here the attention shifts the central focus from the psychological aspects of narrative embedded in memory sites, to the physiological aspects of remembrance enacted through the material, behavioural aspects of placement and fabric choices.

Where the historical narratives attached to ASSI-related memory sites can be understood to transfer a representative version of the past, it is the solid

physicality of the memory sites that anchor and makes these pasts available in the material world. Just as these versions of the past, now public memory, are 'selectively constructed ... [and] interpreted in the light of present-day preoccupations and interests' (Olick et al 2011:18), so too are their vehicles of corporeality. Ranging from complex multi-word interpretive boards, team designed public art installations and various styles of plaques and plinths, to simple grave markers and stone walls or trails, memory sites arguably *hold* the entangled connections to Islander pasts and presents.


The linguistic, narrational content discussed in chapter 5 is created from a psychological position, that is arising from the mind, to *transfer* intangible, experiential points of view and social identity. Of course material aspects of human agency at memory places also arise from psychological imperatives, such as fabric, form and locational choices. However, in contrast to narrative content, the objects at memory sites are enacted, physical, behavioural expressions, that provide and hold in place through time, a tangible, visible format for versions of the past, aligning with characteristics of Quadrant 2. In this way memory sites can be considered to be ASSI material cultural heritage, reifying intangible pasts, in physical form with cognitive content that is able to be passed down through generations. However, layers of cognitive content other than the obvious text and built components are built into the structure of ASSI-related memory sites. This is content that can be considered in the Freudian term as 'preconscious' cognition, that is content of which the creator and consumer may be only dimly aware or process

beneath the conscious level:

(f)or like narrative, which automatically locates events in linear sequence, the memorial also brings events into some cognitive order. In this sense, any memorial marker in the landscape, no matter how alien to its surroundings, is still perceived in the midst of its geography, in some relation to the other landmarks nearby (Young 1993: 7).

The ubiquitous stone memorial for example, instantly alerts the passerby to the fact that here is a 'locale inflected with specific, contextual meaning (Lydon 2005:109). Solid and immutable, 'its very inertia lends it an objectivity and autonomy that appears to evade ideology, seemingly reflecting the natural state of things, yet its meaning is mutable, altering according to circumstance' (Lydon 2005:112).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>33. KANAKA MONUMENT (JOHN THOMPSON) - CHILDERS</b>                        |
| Location GPS data      | -25 14.36 +152 15.46   |
| Street Address         | Chews Road, 'Ruddy's Hill' Childers. Signposted at turn off on Bruce Highway |
| Date Recorded          | 23/10/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Landscape, roadside  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal Plaque on Stone Monument   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | ASSI religious community group   |
| Dedication Date        | Dedicated 01/01/1993   |
| Theme(s)               | Religion, ASSI cultural heritage, people, place marker                       |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Inscription             | <p>This Plaque<br/>is erected in honour of<br/>Missionary John Thompson<br/>as a tribute to his loving compassion and dedicated ministry<br/>to<br/>the Kanaka People<br/>and to The Greater Glory of God.</p> <p>The Kanaka People were brought to this district from the<br/>South Sea Islands in the 19Th Century to work in the Sugar<br/>Fields. The first Service of Worship in Childers was held in<br/>Baker's Barn on 1st January, 1893, supported by the<br/>Conference of Churches of Christ in Queensland and the<br/>Foreign Missionary Committee of Churches of Christ in<br/>Australia. In December, 1897, Construction of a Chapel was<br/>commenced on this land, owned by John Ruddy, well known<br/>for his benevolence and care.</p> <p>This Plaque was unveiled<br/>by<br/>Noel Leitch<br/>President of Conference of Churches of Christ in<br/>Queensland<br/>on the first day of January, 1993.</p> <p>Tribute is also paid to James Ruddy and his sons,<br/>Barry and Lynn, for their Generosity and Co-operation<br/>in the erection of this Monument.</p> |
| Notes/ Sources          | <p><a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/151768190?q=Thompson+Childers&amp;c=picture&amp;versionId=165431378">http://trove.nla.gov.au/work/151768190?q=Thompson+Childers&amp;c=picture&amp;versionId=165431378</a></p> <p>MA Themed Culture, sub-themed Indigenous but notes are muddled with the physical description and some information not matching the actual location and monument, (MA describes totems which are in Millennium Park, Childers)</p> <p>Trove listing is based on research by MA and includes mix up as does 'Monumental Queensland: Signposts on a Cultural Landscape' book by L. Gibson and J. Besley p.128.</p>   |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Good condition, well maintained surrounds   |
| Access and amenities    | Sign posted, Public Access, Vehicle/ transport necessary  |

**Figure 6.1: Kanaka Monument (John Thompson) - Childers**

Taken at face value, a single memorial can hold multiple perspectives, such as the stone monument at Childers, erected in honour of a person, local missionary John Thompson. It is also a place marker, of his eventual, but no longer standing chapel of worship. It is also an anniversary marker, unveiled on the centenary of the first religious service that was held in a nearby barn. Paying tribute to the barn's owner and his children and grandchildren, the memorial is also a point of reference to the historicity of the current local community structure. Sign-posted 'Kanaka Monument' by the local council, the memorial is also an ASSI historical event marker, and a colonial sugar industry marker, referencing 'The Kanaka People [who] were brought to this district from the South Sea Islands in the 19th Century to work in the Sugar Fields'. In this way, a single stone memorial and plaque 'necessarily transforms an otherwise benign site into part of its content, even as it is absorbed into the site and made part of a larger locale' (Young 1993:8).

The cognitive content of ASSI-related memory sites is not limited to the material objects themselves however, as landscape placement also comments on 'the nature of things ... determined on the basis of whether they are central, slightly displaced, or marginal as communicative technologies within society [providing a] subliminal understanding but not verbalised' (Pasztor 2005:24). This is also apparent in the John Thompson memorial, which, despite its heavy content loading, is located in an obscure position on the landscape. The fact that this is an ASSI place marker only reinforces its peripheral position.



At around two kilometres from the Childers township, and 200 metres from the main road on an unsealed dirt road leading only to private property, the memorial is situated in a rural, agricultural landscape (though not sugar cane), that is marginal to the Childers town layout. Although designed for public consumption, to visit this memorial requires knowledge of its existence despite the council's 'Kanaka Monument' sign post, which is quite unassuming and difficult to notice on the side of the high speed arterial Bruce Highway. As this particular memorial is the marker of an historic place, its location, setting and environment can also be argued to be indicative of the Islanders' peripheral position in colonial society, thus demonstrating the way that placement holds cognitive content in the overall meaning of memory sites.



**Figure 6.2: John Thompson Memorial, Childers (Author's photo 23 October 2013)**

For the John Thompson memorial at Childers, its liminal position is offset somewhat by the natural solidity of its stone format. Here again, cognitive content in the form of fabric adds to the overall impression of the memory site. It is not likely by accident that stone in various styles features in the thesis assemblage as the predominant fabric choice for ASSI-related memory sites (see tables 4.4, 4.5). Stone's innate qualities of durability, make the memorial message one of permanence and importance, and John Thompson's large boulder is not an object to be taken lightly. It is here for a meaningful and important reason, and its fabric lends an extra aura of natural belonging to the landscape; a continuous existence which reinforces the claim to historical connection to place.

In this way, 'somewhere between landscape and artefact, such places individualise collective memory at the same time as they express a consensual narrative history' (Lydon 2005:109). Regarding the ASSI then, '[t]hinking of things [memory places] as having cognitive rather than purely visual value is to release them from the low position in which technologies such as writing have placed them', [unlocking for analysis] 'the subliminally understood but not verbalised' (Pasztor 2005:24) meanings that such memory sites hold as representative versions of the past.

For the ASSI memory situation, with contested historical background and in the absence of an official heritage presence in Australia's colonial narrative, the cognitive values of memory sites, verbalised and non-verbalised, are

particularly crucial to building an Australian identity that narratives alone can not provide. As determined in the previous chapter, the linguistic content of ASSI memory places generally functions to transfer representative, supportive, or reframed versions of local pasts through the semiotic style of words and images. The material dimension of memory sites functions to connect and link these otherwise intangible elements to place on the landscape in the present. In this way, the non-verbal cognitive content that establishes and reinforces an Australian Islander identity and belonging to place, in effect also makes the intangible ASSI participation tangible. However, the articulation of an ASSI identity through memorials and memory sites faces major issues of entanglement with other memory claims, most notably shared backgrounds with European colonial industrial and settlement histories. As the historical presence of South Sea Islanders in Queensland is unequivocally articulated with the colonial sugar industry, it is therefore an inextricable component of ASSI-related memory sites in general. The next section discusses the non-verbal cognitive content of ASSI memory sites in regards to these shared history complications.

## **6.2 Entanglement Issues: Memory By Inference Or Connotation**

### **6.2.1: Entangled Landing/ Leaving Places**

Over a decade ago Hayes' (2002) archaeological investigation of physical manifestations of the cultural heritage of ASSI in Queensland recommended landing places as heritage places:

Landing places, including wharves, jetties and offshore islands, define where many of those first Kanakas set foot in Australia ... [and] could also be seen as symbolic of the arrival of a new [ASSI] migrant community in Australia ... Conceivably, such places should exist in every Queensland port town where Islanders were landed, including Bundaberg, Brisbane, Townsville, Lucinda and Cairns. Significantly, the wharves at ports such as Brisbane, Mackay and Cairns are also important as the sites of departure of most of the islanders deported in 1908 under the White Australia Policy (Hayes 2002:78).

Fourteen years later only two possible landing places have emerged in the initial data collection for this thesis: the 'Sugar Wharf' at Port Douglas (Site 2), and the Mackay 'Sugar Cubes' (Site 18). The first has a simple sign announcing its name. The second is a public art installation built in 2009 featuring towers of aluminium cubes upon which are etched the thumb prints of the South Sea Islander's descendants and the names of the ships on which they arrived in recognition of the history of their human cargo.

The Sugar Wharf at Port Douglas was heritage listed with the National Trust

of Queensland in 1983 and the Queensland Heritage Register in 1992 as a place of cultural heritage significance (QHR 600466). Its significance is summed up in one short entry: 'Criterion A The place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history. The building is significant for its historical association with the development of Port Douglas as a shipping terminal' (Department of the Environment, Queensland Government 2016). The authors of a government sponsored conservation management plan in 2008 found this abbreviated significance statement and advised as the first point in their summary of findings that, 'The former Sugar Wharf at Port Douglas is a place of cultural significance as defined in the Queensland Heritage Act. The study finds that the place is significant for a number of reasons and satisfies more than the single criterion for heritage significance that the listing citation ascribes to it. Indeed the study finds that the listing boundary should be extended to include those parts of the foreshore which give the former Sugar Wharf context.' (Allom Lovell Architects 2008:7).

However, as of mid 2016 this has not been done, and, as with the heritage listing, the management plan did not specify any connection of the wharf as a debarkation point for ASSI in its findings and neither report's general history or description sections mention any connection with Islander transportation. This is possibly explainable for Islander arrivals, as the existing wharf replaced and relocated an older wharf in 1905 which is no longer extant. However it would have been in operation for the deportation of ASSI in 1906

and onwards, as reported in *The Queenslander* newspaper on the 12th October:

KANAKA DEPORTATION. DEPARTURE OF THE FIRST BATCH.  
OBJECTION OF THE ISLANDERS.


(From Our Special Representative.) CAIRNS, October 12 [1906].

The steamer Moresby sailed at 5 o'clock this afternoon for the Solomon Islands with 104 returning Pacific Islanders on board, being the first batch under the new contract entered into between the Federal Government and Burns, Philp, and Co., in connection with the deportation scheme, and about fifty more Kanakas will be picked up at Port Douglas, bringing the total up to 150 (*The Queenslander*, 1906:28 <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/25970839> ).

From this it seems likely that the functioning 1905 wharf was used as the pick up point. The Port Douglas sugar wharf is included in the thesis data base as the focus embarkation point, and because it replaced the older 1877 wharf. It also serves to illustrate the hidden historical entanglement that complicates ASSI heritage when other colonial industrial and settler histories intersect.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>2. PORT DOUGLAS SUGAR WHARF(S)</b>       |
| Location GPS data      | -16 28.80 +145 27.64                        |
| Street Address         | Port Douglas Sugar Wharf, Port Douglas 4877 |
| Date Recorded          | 14/10/2012 by JM                            |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, ocean                           |
| Form / style / fabric  | timber wharf                                |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Douglas Shire Council                       |
| Dedication Date        | 1877 & 1905                                 |
| Theme(s)               | Cultural heritage, industry                 |
| Inscription            | Port Douglas Sugar Wharf                    |



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>In November 1877 Port Douglas was proclaimed a Port of Entry for dutiable goods and was a major port for trade and passengers as well as disembarking South Sea Islanders (Guy R. 1999 Baptised Among Crocodiles: A history of the Daintree Aboriginal Mission 1940-1962, Triune Press Pty Ltd, Queensland) This wharf is not extant, replaced by the existing Sugar Wharf in 1905 which likely saw the embarking of retrenched labourers. Image from <a href="http:// Cairns.qld.gov.au/ __data/assets/pdf_file/0013/10822/attachment_cl7_sugar_wharf.pdf">http:// Cairns.qld.gov.au/ __data/assets/pdf_file/0013/10822/attachment_cl7_sugar_wharf.pdf</a></p> <p>Excerpt from The Queenslander Newspaper, Brisbane 12/10/1906: 'KANAKA DEPORTATION. DEPARTURE OF THE FIRST BATCH. OBJECTION OF THE ISLANDERS. (From Our Special Representative.) CAIRNS, October 12 [1906].</p> <p>The steamer Moresby sailed at 5 o'clock this afternoon for the Solomon Islands with 104 returning Pacific Islanders on board, being the first batch under the new contract entered into between the Federal Government and Burns, Philip, and Co., in connection with the deportation scheme, and about fifty more Kanakas will be picked up at Port Douglas, bringing the total up to 150.' <a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/25970839">http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/25970839</a></p> |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | <p>Yes. 1905 Sugar Wharf National Trust of Queensland in 1983 and Queensland Heritage Register in 1992 as a place of cultural heritage significance. QHR 600466.</p>   |
| Current condition       | <p>1877 wharf site not marked. 1905 wharf in good condition</p>  |
| Access and amenities    | <p>Both locations central, disabled access, toilets nearby</p>   |

**Figure 6.3: Port Douglas Sugar Wharf(s)**


A contrast in interpretation is presented by the second landing/ leaving place in the assemblage, a river-side location in central Mackay to which the 'fresh [Islander] recruits' were transferred on landing vessels from nearby Flat Top

Island (Hayes 2002:78). Concealed behind the innocuous name of 'Sugar Cubes', is a memorial dedicated in most part to the heritage of the local ASSI community, but it is also a local place marker; the first sentence of the inscription displaying the entangled history that sites connected with Islander history embody: 'This sculpture reflects the site of the Pioneer River, its peoples, history and the endurance of the Leichhardt tree' (the Leichhardt tree marks the site of the original port of Mackay). Despite this title and opening line, the 'Sugar Cubes' installation is an outstanding ASSI memorial that organises disparate pasts into a cohesive present by highlighting Islander heritage, history and belonging to local historical narrative as part of the multi-cultural community that Mackay is today. This is done through the complex interplay of verbal and non-verbal cues.

The Sugar Cubes memory site, commissioned by the local council and executed by artist Fiona Foley, includes local history, ASSI cultural heritage, and the local community in a place marking example of inclusive public art. It is located at a central position in town and stands out in the landscape, with its towering metal columns inviting viewers to discover its meanings and interact with the humanising qualities of people's finger prints, which bring a commonality across cultures, times and experiences.

Traversing the essential dualism of 'before/after' (Hodder 2012:90) or 'past/present' by featuring the thumb prints of current ASSI members of the local community obviates the need for prolonged verbal instruction.



|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Name                  | <b>18. SUGAR CUBES</b>  |
| Location GPS data     | -21 8.38 +149 11.33   |
| Street Address        | Bluewater Quay, Pioneer River, Mackay   |
| Date Recorded         | 08/05/2013 by JM  |
| Place Category        | Waterfront, river   |
| Form / style / fabric | Box-formed sheet stainless steel with acid-etched lettering   |
| Designer/Builder Name | Fiona Foley for Mackay Regional Council and Artspace Mackay   |
| Dedication Date       | Bluewater Quay was officially opened by the Hon. Tim Mulherin MP and His Worship the Mayor Cr Col Meng on 3 October 2009  |
| Theme(s)              | Local history, ASSI cultural heritage, people, place marker, public art   |
| Inscription           | <p>Fiona Foley, Sugar Cubes, Aluminium, Etched and Paint Filled 2009</p> <p>This sculpture reflects the site of the Pioneer River, its peoples, history and the endurance of the Leichhardt tree. Blackbirded and indentured South Sea Islander men, women and children were brought ashore at this point. The thumb print was one identification mark on arrival and used during exemption. This connects their ancestors to todays descendants, the Australian South Sea Islanders.</p> <p>Commissioned by Mackay Regional Council</p>  |
| Notes/ Sources        | <p>The work's layered meaning is elucidated with details that include, in addition to the sugar cubes, thumb prints of the South Sea Islander's descendants and the transporting ship's names in recognition of the history of their human cargo. A weathered Liechhardt tree marks the site of the original port of Mackay, and the etched sugar-cane plantations represent the connections between the South Sea Islanders and the greater Mackay community – past present and future.</p> <p><a href="http://www.artspacemackay.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/108360/FionaFoley_text.pdf">http://www.artspacemackay.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/108360/FionaFoley_text.pdf</a></p> |
| Image                 |   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | excellent in well maintained public gardens          |
| Access and amenities    | Central location, disabled access and toilets nearby |

**Figure 6.4: Sugar Cube Memorial, Mackay**

The immediacy of the human fingerprint at once unites all viewers, as all possess these body parts, while also confronting each with the separateness of their own individuality, as each is known to be unique. Tying the present ASSI community to Mackay's past in this way provides a tangibility to their intangible heritage story and connects them to their forbears, for whom the prints were an identification mark on arrival that were also used for the exemption process. It also forces all viewers to contemplate the human aspect of the indenture story as the use of the material medium of giant aluminium sugar cubes contrasts another essential dualism, 'human/non-human' (Hodder 2012:90).

The sugar cube imagery ties the ASSI to the sugar industry, an important foundation of Mackay's very existence. This is communicated non-verbally, as, consciously or not, the viewer is led to connect the dots of the finger prints' story to that favourite commodity of many modern palates, sugar, and its place in the present extended community. In this way, the form, fabric and placement of the memorial work to support and anchor an ASSI identity in Mackay through the physical aspects of the memorial that lead the viewer to recognise the continuing involvement of the past and the present. The memorial here is a go-between or intermediary between the past and

present, highlighting the intangible (hi)stories associated with the sugar cubes and the history of the site.

Where quite often it is the physical format of memorials that supports the narrative version of the past, here the small inscription supports the solidity and meaning of the memorial, which speaks in a tangible way through its non-verbal cognitive meanings. In its central location the memorial demands attention, jockeying with other elements of landscape history and settler history and bringing an ASSI identity and associated cultural heritage into the accepted historical versions of place. Also featured are the etched names of the sugar-cane plantations, which represent the connections between the South Sea Islanders and the greater Mackay community across temporal positions of past, present and future. This is the only memorial in the thesis to actively tie the ASSI to the actual plantations and sugar mills and does so in a way that tells a forceful story, acknowledging the entangled background without idealising a particular version, be that positive or negative.

### **6.2.2: ASSI Memory Subsumed by Sugar Industry**

A second area that affects ASSI-related memory strategies through connotation and inference concerns the outcomes of Islander participation that are inherent in the Queensland cultural landscape. Such ASSI heritage results may appear in the form of layered components of the landscape, which, in the case of this thesis, includes roads, a tramline causeway, wharfs, walls and other colonial-era built heritage. These features, however, also have historical connections with sugar industry heritage, which continues to subsume the ASSI component in the broader view of its continued impact on the landscape and the implications behind the accepted post-colonial narratives surrounding place.

The entangled sugar industry infrastructure of historic mills, plantations and fields remains stubbornly silent in regards to the memory of ASSI participation. (Hayes 2002:79) declared that, although,

the skilled labour in the construction of these places might have been European, the sweat and toil was still Melanesian ...[ASSI] working life still revolved around them... [and ASSI] labour provided the impetus and the foundation for one of Australia's vital industries; [therefore ASSI] should receive due recognition for this.

This thesis found this definitively not to be the case, however. The Oakland Sugar Mill Remnants at Morayfield constitute the only thesis memory site to link a relict sugar mill directly to the remnants of Islander labour.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>39. OAKLANDS SUGAR MILL REMNANTS</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -27 05.78 +152 58.43  |
| Street Address         | 68-70 Captain Whish Avenue, Morayfield Queensland.  |
| Date Recorded          | 05/03/2016  |
| Place Category         | Landscape, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Relict Sugar Mill Remnants  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Captain Claudius Buchanan Whish   |
| Dedication Date        | In use 1865 -1872. State heritage listed 18/09/2009   |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, industry   |
| Inscription            | Environmental Parklands   |
| Notes/ Sources         | The remnants are a rare and early surviving reminder of the use of South Sea Islander labour in southeast Queensland. South Sea Islander labourer was employed on Oaklands from 1865 only two years after Robert Towns first introduced their labour on his properties in Queensland. The Oaklands site dates from the early phase of South Sea Islander employment in the sugar industry and could provide important evidence about early practices and, in comparison with other sites, if and how those practices may have changed over time...archaeological investigations of the remnants has potential to answer important research questions relating to early sugar processing techniques and technologies and the working conditions experienced by South Sea Islander labourers working on Queensland sugar plantations' <a href="https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=645607#">https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=645607#</a> |

Image



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes. Queensland Heritage Register 645607 on 18/09/2009. |
| Current condition       | Landscape overgrown but well maintained by council.     |
| Access and amenities    | Street access.  |

**Figure 6.5: Oaklands Sugar Mill Remnants, Morayfield**

The Islander connection, however, is so far unproven, and the Queensland heritage register listing details the site as a *possible* reminder with *potential* to answer questions regarding ASSI experiences. The site itself is benign, a vacant block of land in a residential area, innocuously labeled with a dilapidated 'Environmental Parklands' sign. There is no obvious historical evidence available to the visitor who does not have archaeological experience and even then excavation would be necessary to separate an Islander connection from general industrial sugar mill remains. However, the site does provide an accessible place of memory should appropriate signage and public dissemination ensue. The actual heritage listing of 2009 is articulate in terms of a relevant case for a future ASSI-related archaeological project.

The remnants are a rare and early surviving reminder of the use of South Sea Islander labour in southeast Queensland. South Sea Islander labourer was employed on Oaklands from 1865 only two years after Robert Towns first introduced their labour on his properties in Queensland. The Oaklands site dates from the early phase of South Sea Islander employment in the sugar industry and could provide important evidence about early practices and, in comparison with other sites, if and how those practices may have changed over time...archaeological investigations of the remnants has potential to answer important research questions relating to early sugar processing techniques and technologies and the working conditions experienced by South Sea Islander labourers working on Queensland sugar plantations' (retrieved 18th August 2016 <https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=645607#>).

This supports Hayes' earlier opinion that:

Plantation sites are examples of early South Sea Islander heritage places which could act as important reference points for the Islander community today and provide insight into what plantation life was like (Hayes 2002:78).

However, it appears at this point in late 2016, that these memory linkages or styles of memory are not necessarily those which Islanders today wish to cultivate, perhaps appealing more to an academic, evidence-based form of memory making than to general community connections. ASSI descendant memory does not appear to embrace memory connection between ASSI heritage and relict, or even current, sugar plantations, as Hayes discovered:

From the conversations I have had with Australian South Sea Islanders, very few of them know much about the plantations in their district, or where plantation sites are located, except if they are still operating as sugar mills today' (Hayes 2002:78).

This may well be due to the darker, negative aspects of such industry connections, which are perhaps uncomfortable and cognitively dissonant with established sugar industry settlement and community making narratives for the broader public. For ASSI descendants these may be reminders of an 'exploitative and abusive past' (Hayes 2002:79).



## 6.3 Transport Networks and Over-Building

A further issue for memory entanglement involves out-dated transport networks that were created by Islander labour, but now face being lost to development. The state heritage listed Habana tramline and causeway wharf site at Mackay (Site 17), and the South Sea Islanders' sugar wagon trail at Yeppoon (Site 24) are two such cases.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>17. MACKAY HABANA TRAMLINE CAUSEWAY AND WHARF SITE</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -20 59.43 +149 02.21  |
| Street Address         | Habana Wharf Road Mackay  |
| Date Recorded          | 14/04/2016  |
| Place Category         | Landscape, track - causeway   |
| Form / style / fabric  | stone and gravel causeway track   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Habana Sugar Mill with ASSI labourers   |
| Dedication Date        | 1883-1901   |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, ASSI cultural heritage, industry   |
| Inscription            | None  |
| Notes/ Sources         | The Habana Tramline Causeway and Wharf Site are important and now rare evidence of the significant contribution made by South Sea Islanders to the establishment of a viable sugar industry in colonial Queensland, including the establishment of its transport infrastructure. With a number of deaths of Islander labourers said to have occurred there during its construction, the place has a symbolic association with these people and the difficult lives they led while indentured to work in Australia.' |

Image



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes QHR 602749 Entered 14/05/2010 - (QHR image) |
| Current condition       | Relict  |
| Access and amenities    | Private transport necessary                     |

**Figure 6.6: Habana Tramline Causeway and Wharf Site details**

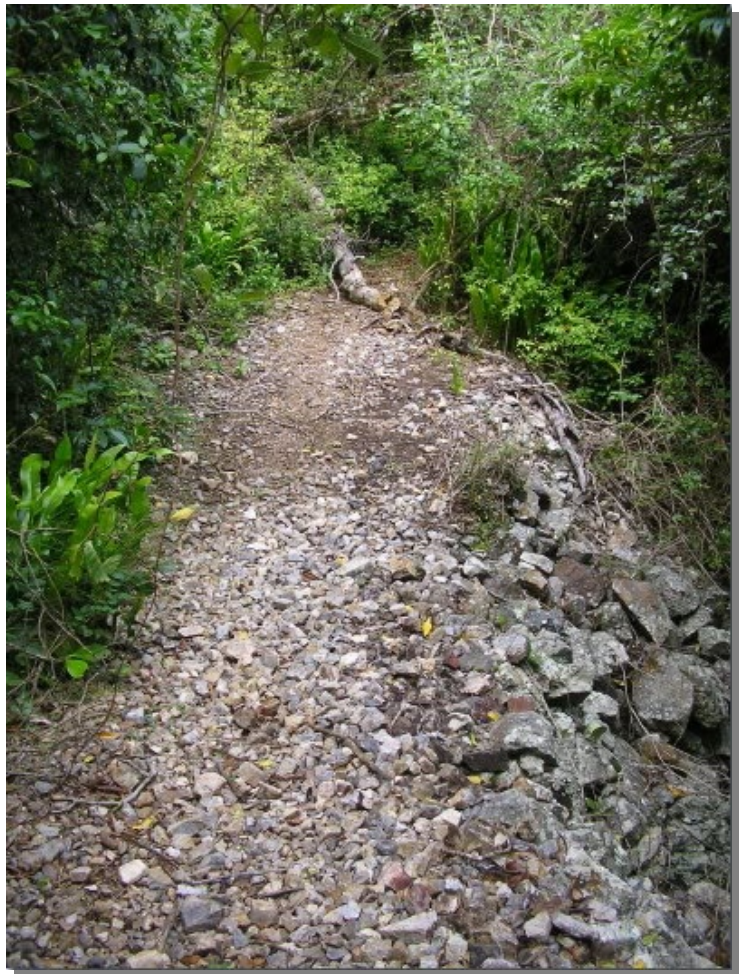
Both roadways have been listed on the Queensland Heritage Register, the Yeppoon wagon trail in 1992 and the Habana tramline in 2010. The Yeppoon trail was also listed as an indicative place on the Register of the National Estate in 1996. Both are unmarked and very difficult to identify. Even with GPS co-ordinates the Yeppoon track proved elusive and is becoming subsumed by encroaching residential subdivision. It does not appear in the current Queensland Heritage Register under its previous file number.

Despite the Yeppoon South Sea Islanders' sugar wagon trail's disappearance from the register, however, its existence and ASSI connotations remain in the memory of the broader community, showing up on both the unstructured internet search and during follow up fieldwork at the Yeppoon tourist

information office. Here the staff knew of the trail, and supplied a photocopy of the missing Queensland Heritage Register document from 1992, File No 601652 (see appendix 6). On this document is a hand written and undated report of the trail's overgrowth from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service personnel stating that it passes through private and council owned land but not through national park land. The tourist office staff reported personal knowledge of the trail; they also believed the trail not to be in current or common usage (pers. comm., 25/10/2013).

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>24. SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS' SUGAR WAGON TRAIL - YEPPOON</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -23 07.43 +150 44.59<br>GPS data on the Australian Heritage Database not currently accurate   |
| Street Address         | Ross Street, Yeppoon  |
| Date Recorded          | 25/10/2013  |
| Place Category         | Landscape, track  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Track formed with stone pitching and culvert work (reported)  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | South Sea Islander labourers under instruction Farnborough Sugar Plantation Mill Personnel  |
| Dedication Date        | Built in 1884. Nominated for RNE 18/12/1996.  |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, industry   |
| Inscription            | No interpretation or sign posting   |
| Notes/ Sources         | Yeppoon tourist information staff knew of the trail, and had photocopied document of the Queensland Heritage Register entry from 1992, File No 601652 (see appendix 6). On this document is a hand written and undated report of the trail's overgrowth from Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Personnel (not dated) stating that it passes through private and council owned land but not through national park land. The tourist staff reported that the trail was not currently commonly accessed or a matter of local public interest to their knowledge (Pers.Comm 25/10/2013).<br>large from<br><a href="http://www.yeppooninfo.com.au/archives/exploring-the-kanaka-trail">http://www.yeppooninfo.com.au/archives/exploring-the-kanaka-trail</a> |

Image



Heritage Status Listing

Yes. Nominated for the Register of the National Estate (Non-statutory archive) on 18/12/1996.

Place ID 100841, Place File No. 4/03/186/0017, Legal Status, Indicative Place.

[http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place\\_detail;place\\_id=100841](http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;place_id=100841)

Previously Queensland Heritage Register - File no 601652 but this entry is not on current QHR list at time of thesis research.

Note: This trail has similarities in date of origin, materials and technology with 'Old Byfield Road and Stone-Pitched Crossing' QHR 601746, however the latter is not linked with ASSI in QHR report, suggesting a possible future study.

Current condition

Heavily overgrown with small trees and shrubs and built out, surrounded by residential development

Access and amenities

The alleged trail passes through private land and some council owned land north of Yeppoon (but not through any National Park) and with no obvious entry points or controlled up-keep is possibly no longer discernible or extant, except in small sections with no public access.

**Figure 6.7: South Sea Islanders' Sugar Wagon Trail - Yeppoon**

There is, however, an 'on-line' trail of memory regarding the physical Yeppoon 'Kanaka Trail' as it is commonly referred to. Queensland rail heritage has an entry with historic photographs of the old sugar wagons that traversed this Islander-built trail in 1884 between Yeppoon and the Farnborough Sugar Mill, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service mentions it in its management plan of 2000, hiking routes, ancestry sites and Yeppoon info sites, amongst many others, also mention the unmarked trail. A 'facebook' community called Central Queensland Old Pictures and Yarns shows a conversation in 2012 in which people reminisce and comment about their memories of walking the Yeppoon Kanaka trail in the past and talk of their wish to 'find' it again. One entry, dated March 2012, speaks of unfinished efforts by an un-named group a decade previously to erect poles to demarcate the entrance.

Elsewhere, an online article gives a first hand account from a family group in 2008 who searched for the site and had difficulty in finding the trail:

At this point we weren't sure whether or not this was the Kanaka trail, but as we ventured further on and saw that the rows of rocks on either side were continuing, we decided that no-one would go to this much effort just for a walking track. A bit further on, we came to this large collection of rocks that confirmed that this was the Kanaka trail (retrieved 19th August 2016 from

<http://www.yeppooninfo.com.au/archives/exploring-the-kanaka-trail> ).





**Figure 6.8: Islander-built trail, Yeppoon**  
( [www.yeppooninfo.com.au](http://www.yeppooninfo.com.au) )

Their attached photographs seem to support their discovery as being the Islander trail. From this online attention, it is fair to say that public memory and connection to an ASSI past at this site is intact and has government sanctioned memory-status significance attached to it in the form of heritage reports. However, there appears to be no practical protection or interpretation of this site for present or future ASSI-related memory strategies. The situation of public memory regarding this place is reflected in the concluding remarks

of the 2008 entry, including an unhappy face symbol at the end:

Now for the sad part: Just 30 metres or so after the above photos we came out onto a block of land that had been all cleared and dug away. When we walked over to the other side to try and find the trail again, there were no traces. Today (Sunday) my mum was talking to some friends who knew more about the Kanaka trail and they said that the Capricorn Coast Historical Society had actually taken the developer of this land to court over the issue, but the developer had won :-(

(Retrieved 19 August 2016 from


<http://www.yepooninfo.com.au/archives/exploring-the-kanaka-trail> ).

## 6.4 Islander Built Boundary Walls

A similar situation of entanglement with sugar industry heritage and contemporary landscape occurs with the three iconic Islander built dry stone walls. Either already listed on the Queensland Heritage Register or submitted for consideration, all three are definitive physical evidence of Islander presence and contribution to the establishment of local industry and settlement landscapes. Commonly associated with 19th century ASSI labouring skills, the 'South Sea Islander Wall' at Mon Repos (Site 28), the 'Kanakanaka Wall on Escarpment' at Buderim (Site 37), and the Dry-rubble Boundary Wall of Sunnyside Sugar Plantation' at Bundaberg (Site 29) are all testament to colonial Islander land clearing efforts.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>28. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER STONE WALL - MON REPOS</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -24 47.92 +152 26.54   |
| Street Address         | Grange Road, Bargara   |
| Date Recorded          | 26/10/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Landscape, rural   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Dry stone rubble boundary wall (approx.1.5 km)   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | South Sea Islander labourers under instruction of Mon Repos Sugar Plantation Personnel                                 |
| Dedication Date        | Built 1884- early 1900s. State Heritage listed 01/10/2001  |
| Theme(s)               | Industry, local history  |
| Inscription            | None. See Queensland Heritage Register for full details of Cultural Heritage Significance (on-line address link below) |
| Notes/ Sources         | Queensland State Heritage Register   |



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes Queensland State Heritage Register, entered 01/10/2001<br>Place ID 602230<br><a href="https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602230">https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602230</a> |
| Current condition       | Substantially intact but overgrown in places   |
| Access and amenities    | Transport and GPS/ directions necessary, not sign posted, encroaches private land, only partially accessible by foot   |

**Figure 6.9: South Sea Islander Stone Wall - Mon Repos**

The six criteria of significance for heritage listing relating to these dry stone walls include their capacity to:

1. Demonstrate the evolution or pattern of Queensland's history through their survival as important evidence of the enormous contribution made by South Sea Islanders to the establishment of a viable sugar industry in Queensland, (criterion A)
2. Demonstrate rare, uncommon or endangered aspects of Queensland's cultural heritage as rare surviving examples of previously common landscape features (criterion B)
3. Yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Queensland's history via better understanding the role of South Sea Islanders in the sugar industry and Queensland's history (criterion C)
4. Demonstrate the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural

place as examples of local 19th century dry wall construction (criterion D)

5. Have strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group, the Islander descendant communities via connection with ancestors (criterion G)
6. Have special association with the life or work of particular people of importance in Queensland's history, the ASSI workforce of the 19th and 20th centuries (criterion H)

It is perhaps surprising then, that both the Buderim and Bundaberg walls required private applications from members of the public to the Queensland government for inclusion on the list. Also, despite their obvious and noted importance as ASSI-related heritage sites, there is currently no obvious evidence of interpretive signage to render these as memory sites.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>29. SUNNYSIDE SUGAR PLANTATION (FORMER) REMAINS</b>                                   |
| Location GPS data      | -24 51.29 +152 24.74   |
| Street Address         | 94 Windermere Road, Windermere, Bundaberg.   |
| Date Recorded          | 26/10/2013   |
| Place Category         | Landscape, rural   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Dry stone rubble boundary wall (approx. 200m) and Kanaka burial site (approx. 29 graves) |
| Designer/ Builder Name | South Sea Islander labourers under instruction of Sunnyside Sugar Plantation Personnel   |
| Dedication Date        | Burials 1880s - early 1900s. State Heritage listed 13/05/1996                            |
| Theme(s)               | Industry, ASSI cultural heritage, graves marker  |
| Inscription            | none   |
| Notes/ Sources         | Queensland State Heritage Register, Bundaberg Tourist Information                        |

Image



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes. Queensland State Heritage Register, entered 13/05/1996<br>Place ID 601700<br><a href="https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=16455">https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=16455</a>   |
| Current condition       | Well maintained by private owner  |
| Access and amenities    | Although this is a privately owned property, the owner Mr. Brian Courtice has been instrumental to have the graves recognised and heritage listed, hosting a commemoration service (dedication ceremony and commemoration service held 16/8/13) and access to interested parties<br><a href="http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-16/service-honours-heritage-listed-south-sea-islanders-gravesite/4891894">http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-16/service-honours-heritage-listed-south-sea-islanders-gravesite/4891894</a> |

**Figure 6.10: Sunnyside Sugar Plantation (former) remains**

This results in a general blending into the existing landscapes, without the public necessarily recognising, and therefore remembering their significance as ASSI artefacts as opposed to natural rocky outcrops or insignificant farm boundary fences. This situation can be considered analogous to the ship of Theseus paradox, although rather than the actual fabric being replaced, the fabric has become another ship with another story attached. In this case, to all intents and purposes, for who are viewers unfamiliar with the words of the

‘song’ of Islander connection, the dry stone walls are merely facets of the Queensland farming landscape.



**Figure 6.11: Stone wall in farmland, Bargara (Author's photo 26 October 2013)**

However, dry stone walls do hold important roles in the formation and transference of public memory for some people in the local community. This is evidenced by interactions of community members with the Bundaberg site as a memory place at the commemoration service held in 2013 as part of the 150 year celebration efforts, and reported on ABC News (Taylor 2013:1). Indeed, the chair of the Queensland Heritage Council acknowledged in a media release that:

The boundary wall, which is approximately 200 metres long, also provides important physical evidence of the manual nature of the South Sea Islanders' contribution. It survives as one of the more intact examples of its type in the Bundaberg district.



Professor Coaldrake said the South Sea Islander community of Bundaberg had indicated that *Sunnyside* provided a strong and special spiritual association with their ancestors who lived, worked and died on the plantation (Queensland Heritage Council).

Also, the Bundaberg South Sea Islander Heritage and Community Complex features a 'Replica Kanaka Wall' built on site by members of a Green Corps team who also cleared and repaired the original 'Kanaka Wall' at Mon Repos. An inscription on the interpretive board at the community complex reads:

Each team member was involved in the construction and gained a true understanding of the work performed by the Kanakas on the original wall. This replica will commemorate the contribution made by South Sea Islanders during the period of slave labour as well as being a source of pride for participants for many years to come.



**Figure 6.12: Replica stone wall, Bundaberg (Author's photo 23 October 2013)**

In this way, the dry stone wall building technique becomes a facet of ASSI-related memory. The physical evidence of the actual extant walls themselves tie colonial era craftsmanship via ASSI labour to place, creating potent memory places for those who recognise this aspect of the walls' creation. The building technique itself, however, preserved in-situ and practiced as an aspect of cultural heritage becomes a kinaesthetic memory practice, a conduit of sorts between past and future generations that adds meaning to the original dry stone walls. It will be a loss to public memory and local heritage if the existing walls are not preserved and their relevance disseminated via appropriate interpretive memorial signage as has been the fate of many other examples now lost in landscape reuse.

## 6.5 ASSI Lost in Colonial Settlement Narrative


The very history that forms such a major component of ASSI identity, also comprises the back drop to much of coastal Queensland's establishment history, which ironically, often omits or represses Islander presence from the accepted historical narrative. The Fitzgerald landing cairn at Innisfail (Site 9), for example, is situated at a central location on the edge of a sweeping path leading to the riverside path and boat mooring marina. The squat stone and cement memorial sports a white marble plaque proudly proclaiming the following inscription, inlaid in metal letters:

THIS STONE  
COMMEMORATES THE LANDING  
IN 1879 OF THE FITZGERALD PARTY  
THE FOUNDERS OF  
INNISFAIL SUGAR INDUSTRY

What it omits to mention are the

Eleven Europeans and twenty Kanakas [who] comprised the pioneer expedition which Sailed from Brisbane on April 17, 1880 and made the first camp at Flying Fish Point on June 5, 1880. There the first sugar cane was planted, despite fierce hostility from the blacks (Innisfail pays tribute newspaper article 1949, archived at <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63082460#>).

|                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Name              | <b>9. FITZGERALD LANDING CAIRN</b> |
| Location GPS data | -17 31.44 +146 01.96               |
| Street Address    | Innisfail, 4860                    |
| Date Recorded     | 18/02/2014 by JM                   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Place Category          | Waterfront, river  |
| Form / style / fabric   | Stone set in cement cairn, marble plaque with metal lettering  |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | local government   |
| Dedication Date         | 05/09/1949   |
| Theme(s)                | Local history, place marker, people, industry  |
| Inscription             | <p>THIS STONE<br/>         COMMEMORATES THE LANDING<br/>         IN 1879 OF THE FITZGERALD PARTY<br/>         THE FOUNDERS OF<br/>         INNISFAIL SUGAR INDUSTRY</p>  |
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>MA Themed Landscape, sub-themed Discovery<br/>         'Thomas Henry Fitzgerald led the private enterprise Johnstone River Settlement Party, assisted by Sub-Inspector Johnstone and his men. The Party, which included 11 Europeans and 22 South Sea Islanders, landed on the banks of the Johnstone on 23 April 1880.' (<a href="http://monumentaaustralia.org.au/search/display/91658-fitzgerald-landing">http://monumentaaustralia.org.au/search/display/91658-fitzgerald-landing</a>)</p> <p>'In 1880, TH Fitzgerald and his party of 10 Irishmen and 35 South Sea Islanders arrived to clear scrub (some now World Heritage rainforest). Fitzgerald's company took up 8 selections on the Johnstone River, financed entirely by Miss Florence O'Reilly in the names of Brisbane's Sisters of Mercy.' (local historian Peter Jkel)<br/> <a href="http://bingilbaybulletin.tripod.com/riverreflections/id5.html">http://bingilbaybulletin.tripod.com/riverreflections/id5.html</a></p> <p><a href="https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63082460#">https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63082460#</a></p> |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Some stones from facade missing and cracks to cement. Two metal letters of inscription missing. Well maintained setting.   |
| Access and amenities    | Central town location with disabled access and toilets nearby.   |

**Figure 6.13: Fitzgerald Landing Cairn, Innisfail**

The cairn, erected to commemorate the landing, was unveiled on 5th September 1949 on the bank of the Johnstone River, as the highlight of the



Back to Innisfail celebration. A park area along the river was dedicated as Fitzgerald Park, trees were planted in his honour and 'a great concourse of people gathered' to hear his grandson accept the honour (Innisfail pays tribute news article 1949, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/63082460#>). The cairn, then, was undoubtedly important to identity and place making at this time, and is still in living memory of establishment history. Whether ASSI people were included in this re-enactment is unknown, but is unlikely, given that the newspaper article covering the event is very thorough and rich in details of the occasion, but makes no mention of any ASSI involvement.

In 2014 the cairn was still in situ in the well tended park, and in generally good order, although two of its letters were missing. Two years later, in 2016, a twin cairn was erected to flank the opposite side of the path in recognition of a new wharf built that same year. The letters are still missing from the Fitzgerald landing cairn, along with a piece of its stone facade, despite the official opening of its twin by several honoraries. This indicates that, despite the original cairn's historical significance, which indeed affects the placement of the new matching cairn, interest is not sufficient to repair the missing letters and damaged stone even though the new memorial dedication ceremony took place in close proximity.



**Figure 6.14: Old and new cairns, Fitzgerald Landing, Innisfail (Author's photo 21 June 2016)**

Perhaps the focus of attention was not on the original cairn for its memory *content*, but rather on its *function* as a memory marker of a significant event. In the second cairn attention is again focused on the 'leaders' of the project, almost to the exclusion of the project itself.

The Innisfail Commercial Wharf  
was jointly opened by  
The Honourable Curtis Pitt MP  
Treasurer of Queensland  
Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships  
Minister for Sport  
Member for Mulgrave  
and  
Mayor Bill Shannon  
Cassowary Coast Regional Council  
on  
12 March 2016  
in the presence of  
Deputy Mayor Bryce MacDonald, Cr Glenn Raleigh,  
Cr Mark Nolan, Cr Ian Rule and Cr Kylie Farinelli

These two memorials speak of European settlement themes and represent interests and values connected to hegemonic assertions of place dominance. Deriving meaning from the solid permanence of fabric and form, the socio-cultural locational relationship between the cairns and the city river landscape, as well as with each other, the memorials' stolid presence cannot be removed from Innisfail's historical narrative. The particular players named, members of the current political elite, assume centre stage, leaving no room to remember the support crews who co-created the locale.

Of interest in this particular story is the unveiling on the same day of a second memorial which recognises the river site as a significant Indigenous place, Chjowai: Where the Two Rivers Meet (figure 6.15 below). Mentioned briefly in a North Queensland Register newspaper article reporting these tandem unveilings, there is no accompanying photograph as there is of the council members and plaque, despite the presence of Mamu representatives and the artistic nature of the new memorial.



**Figure 6.15: Chjowai memorial, Innisfail (Author's photo 21 June 2013)**

The placement for this memorial is lower down the river bank, alongside the water, abutting the river foliage. Highlighting the difference in meaning of the two unveilings, is the Indigenous focus on the location, rather than the financing, council involvement, or the newly erected wharf infrastructure. It is the meeting of the north and south Johnstone rivers as they journey seawards that is of primary importance, marking 'a significant place for

traditional owners, the Mamu people' (North Queensland Register 2016:1). Memory in this case is a continuation of a deeper history, entrenched in the meaning and relationship to place, rather than the marking or ownership of a particular moment in that time.

Within 20 metres of both, however, on the same river bank but in a higher, more prominent position nearer the street, another memorial dominates the landscape (Site 8). Erected by the Italian community of the Innisfail district in 1959 on the centenary of the separation of Queensland from New South Wales, the towering ornate white marble column and fountain, complete with life sized cane cutter model, held sufficient importance to the community to have it carved and sent out from Italy. Arguably proclaiming a similar story of settlement and historical connection, the Cane cutters memorial remembers, from the other end of the spectrum, the people labouring in the fields, although the ASSI are only memorialised by inference rather than direct inclusion.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>8.PIONEERS OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY MEMORIAL - INNISFAIL</b>                            |
| Location GPS data      | -17 31.44 +146 01.95  |
| Street Address         | Fitzgerald Esplanade, Innisfail 4860  |
| Date Recorded          | 18/02/2014  |
| Place Category         | Waterfront, river   |
| Form / style / fabric  | White marble carved in Italy with memorial fountain                                     |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Renato Beretta for the Italian community of Innisfail District                          |
| Dedication Date        | Officially unveiled by the Premier of Queensland, the Hon F Nicklin, on 4 October 1959. |
| Theme(s)               | People, local history, industry   |



Inscription

TO THE PIONEERS  
OF THE SUGAR  
INDUSTRY  
DONATED BY THE ITALIAN  
COMMUNITY OF INNISFAIL  
DISTRICT  
ON THE FIRST CENTENARY  
OF THE STATE OF QUEENSLAND  
1859 1959

Notes/ Sources

Inscription is in English and Italian  
MA Themed Technology, sub-themed Agriculture

Image



Heritage Status Listing

Yes Queensland State Heritage listed  
Place ID 602041 Registry entry date 29/04/2003  
<https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=16777> Also Register of the National Estate  
(Indicative Place) Place ID 102020.

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Current condition    | Excellent condition, well maintained in public park by council            |
| Access and amenities | Central town location with disabled access and public conveniences nearby |

**Figure 6.16: *Pioneers Of The Sugar Industry Memorial – Innisfail***

Entered on the Register of the National Estate and the Queensland Heritage Register, both listings consider significant the multicultural aspects relating ‘to pioneers of the sugar industry, which predates the nation-wide move towards multiculturalism later in the twentieth century’ (Queensland Heritage Register, retrieved 22nd August 2016 from [environment.ehp.qld.gov.au](http://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au)). The Register of the National Estate however, places pioneer history in context with the following entry:

The first sugar cane was grown on a commercial scale in Queensland in 1864... It was at first grown in large plantations, using Melanesian indentured labour. At the time it was thought that the climate was too hot and humid for Europeans to undertake the intense manual labour required to cultivate and harvest the cane.

The recruiting and treatment of Melanesian, or 'Kanaka' labour became a subject of increasing criticism and concern. A Royal Commission in 1885 recommended a halt to recruiting within five years and the gradual repatriation of Melanesian workers ... there was still concern about climatic conditions ... and workers were [brought] from the warmer parts of Europe in the hope that they would more easily bear the heat ... In 1891 the first large group of Italians landed in Townsville (Australian heritage database, retrieved 22nd August 2016 from [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au) ).

The short biographies of these four memorials, situated within metres of each other on this Innisfail river side, hide in cracks the complex entangled history of ASSI presence in the memory of place, settlement, and industry. Over-

looked in the Fitzroy settlement story of 1949, over-written in the consequent Italian cane industry story of 1959, the ASSI may perhaps take some comfort in knowing that their story fits into the deeper, on-going history of place that the Indigenous river convergence memorial of 2016 points to. In any case, the liminality of ASSI people in memory here, mirrors their actual experiences historically, components of other histories, back-stories for those who already know the words. However, again within metres, the Innisfail River Reflections mosaic of 1999, discussed previously in this chapter mentions the ASSI directly albeit as part of another story. The overarching intention of the memorial's creator is to present Innisfail's 'diverse history ... weaving and connecting the collected stories of multicultural youth and older folk in the Johnstone Shire to break down prejudices for the future' (Bingil Bay Bulletin 2006: ). This goes some way to explaining the representation of Islanders as willing participants in a positively themed multicultural success story. For the ASSI this has the effect of contesting and, again, over-writing, the alternative (hi)stories told in other memory sites.

The Innisfail memorials demonstrate some examples of the transfer of cognitive information in ways other than purely verbally. Selective messages about people and places, sometimes based on specific ideologies and representing certain values and interests have all been demonstrated in these memorials (Lukinbeal & Kennedy 1993:77). This indicates that ASSI-related memorials function not only to transfer versions of the colonial past, but also contemporary post-colonial presents.



## 6.6 Conclusion

Chapter 6 has identified entangled non-verbal cues that operate through material information and that adds a further entry point to understanding the cognitive function of ASSI-related memory sites. Where linguistic narratives are used to transfer versions of the ASSI colonial past, the physical mechanisms of memorials are used to hold these versions in place through time. Linguistically, continuation of colonial attitudes and terminologies was detected, sometimes evolving into different use patterns as post-colonial intent developed. In addition, post-colonial attitudes and intentions affecting the cognitive content of versions of the past through the physical features of memory sites may in turn affect and influence public memory formation regarding aspects of contested ASSI history.

Claims and sites varied between memorials that were intentionally designed to transfer versions of ASSI pasts and connections that were available only by inference or connotation through memorial back stories. The sites share in common, however, a reliance on textual support of ASSI participation, even where this is obvious by omission rather than inclusion. In this way, socio-cultural tensions surrounding the intangible experiences of ASSI are made visible, as are differences in views and versions of the same site based on both creator and viewer experiences and connections.

The psychological and experiential concepts of the ASSI past represented through the memorials display various expressions of localised histories, with

a single memorial capable of holding multiple perspectives concurrently. Overall, however, the cognitive content of the memorials operates through subliminal means connected to linguistic choices, landscape placement, and fabric to show that, even where ASSI connections are subsumed by other histories, interest and recognition amongst local communities is retained when physical evidence remains. However, knowledge is still liminal, not widely disseminated, and interpretive meaning relies heavily on song, whether written or orally transmitted.

Chapters 5 and 6 have considered the thesis assemblage from the social and material perspectives of embedded narrative and entangled placements that function to transfer and hold in time and place versions of the past. It is argued that these memory strategies have the effect of reframing local (hi)stories, the by-product of which is to connect socio-cultural tensions and make them visible, and which together can influence public memory. Alternative versions, (or songs), of ASSI pasts continue to morph through various conscious and subliminal physical methods as the vessels (or ships) of their transferral are 'anchored' in the public sphere according to changing socio-cultural refinements. In this way versions of ASSI identity and cultural heritage are constructed, but are limited to representations of the past. This has the effect of restricting thinking of ASSI-related memory places to signifiers or symbols of the past. This removes them from the very elements they are purported to represent (Martin 2013:87), such as belonging and place, as they become abstract cultural objects and symbols of colonial and

post-colonial themes such as industry, settlement and multiculturalism.

The following two chapters will build on these concepts to move on from the function of the memory assemblage in transferring the past to consider its role and relationships in the present, and the processes that have created its continued existence.

## **CHAPTER 7: Interactive Memory - Philosophical Constructs**

**'[M]ost things made by humans serve a dual function in which “thinking with” plays a significant part. Some objects are made largely to think with. They are all meant to be experienced visually ... visibility...is a means to a cognitive end' (Pasztor 2005:21).**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Previous chapters have considered human behaviours of verbal and non-verbal messages inherent in ASSI-related memory sites through linguistic and material placements. This determined that selectively constructed versions of the ASSI past are signified via lingual and depicted narrative cues, with the memory object itself taking the material, non-verbal role of signifier. In this way, mental concepts of, and about the past, take a material form from which their messages may be interpreted. Towards this end, several conscious and subliminal behavioural methods were identified as transferring meaning from the past into the present. However, due to differing individual levels of background experience and historical awareness on the part of the viewer, these messages may be received with meanings distinct from those intended at the time of the memory object's creation.

This indicates that although the materiality of the memory object acts as an intermediary between past and present, the memorial itself does not ensure

continued acceptance of particular versions of the past. Rather, while such memory objects stake claims to places through their particular pasts, meaning is continually (re)created via the relationship of their semiotic and material content with contingent presents. This applies across the entire thesis assemblage, including constructed memorials and built or relict objects such as dry stone walls. In this way, although the materiality of memory sites may appear permanent and impervious to time, attached versions of the past are not static, but can influence and interact with public memory in multiple ways.

Moving on from signified versions of the past, chapter 7 now turns the focus to consider issues of contemporary relevance regarding ASSI-related memory sites. In terms of the thesis quadrant framework, this marks a move from interpreting through considerations of the first two quadrants, mental and material aspects of memorial making, to the second two quadrants which focus on philosophical and social representations inherent in the memory sites. This is interpreted via attached community perspectives that provide meaning through form choices and thematic aspects of the thesis assemblage. Of particular interest to this study are the ways in which post-colonial Australia is acknowledging and dealing with the memory of a hidden minority group from its colonial past; one that was never meant to be included in the country's future.

Considering memory places from this perspective allows essential societal

and moral values to emerge that shed light on the ways that present day communities receive and make use of the past in the construction of their accepted historical narratives. This is particularly significant regarding ASSI contested histories, where ethical concepts such as religion and slavery collude with colonial theories of race and expansion. This has resulted in the portrayal of cultural and societal stereotypes in the past which may spill over into the present day public memory sphere.

To illustrate this point, the following analogous example of current racist social stereotyping involving South Sea Islander minorities demonstrates that insidious permeation of mainstream consciousness is able to lurk very close to the surface of seemingly benign formats. In this instance in the form of a television 'mockumentary' about 'Jonah From Tonga', the series portrays 'a rebellious Tongan youth with poor social skills and limited prospects' (Bolitho 2014).



***Figure 7.1: 'Forty-year-old white actor dressing up as a 14-year-old Tongan boy in brown face' (Bolitho 2014 - Image courtesy buzzed.com)***

A particular criticism of this portrayal is that aspects out of character for Tongan society and beliefs, such as paternal swearing at the family are injected into the story to invoke a humorous response from the target, predominantly white, viewing audience which may then be construed as normative and even adopted by Tongan children (Bolitho 2014). That the creators of the program and by extension, the general Australian audience have accepted and perhaps identified such a stereotype without knowledge of where this heritage fits into the Australian story is indicative of the position that the ASSI community currently holds. The characterisation has raised

concerns about possible effects the television programme may have on Tongan children at school and the negative influences it may have on general community attitudes towards people of Islander descent.

In a similar fashion, the themes and styles in which the ASSI past is represented and ASSI people portrayed in public through memorials, have the potential to influence general community attitudes in the present. This includes those of the ASSI descendants themselves, about their own pasts and the articulation of their own communities and Australian society in general. Thinking about ASSI-related memory places from this perspective aligns with the philosophical and theoretical concepts of quadrant three. This helps us to recognise and interpret present day relationships with memory spaces, rather than peering with a dedicated backward view into the past. The relevance of altering the focus from one of interpreting memory places as messages from the past, to one of investigating relationships between these places and the present, invokes a symmetrical archaeological stance, that:

draws attention to mutual arrangement and relationship. Symmetry, in this mutuality, implies an attitude that we should apply the same measures and values to ourselves as to what we are interested in (Latour 1989). A consonance of past and present, individual and structure, person and artifact, biological form and cultural value, symmetry is about relationships (Shanks 2007:591).

The following section then, concerns the relationships that memory sites, in



their various forms, have with contemporary local communities, societal values and themes of ASSI identity. In this way, the concept of memory places is extended to consider relationships between these versions of the past and the creation of local presents. As memorials compel us to become aware of the past by their very creation and existence, a justification of particular versions of the past, as well as an implied authenticity and official approval of certain values in the present is created. The focus, therefore, is on the ways that ASSI-related memory places intersect and influence the creation of versions of the present through their form, drawing several case studies from the diverse thesis assemblage.

The variety and complexity of the fabric and form choices of ASSI-related memory sites make even determining a comprehensively acceptable form of rhetoric with which to discuss them or identify their primary functions open to conjecture. To deal with this situation generally, Gibson and Besley's 2004 publication *Monumental Queensland: Signposts on a Cultural Landscape*, uses the generic terms 'public art' and 'outdoor cultural objects' simultaneously to include many of the forms represented by ASSI-related memory objects, such as traditional statues, monuments, memorials, mosaics, murals, sculpture, and fountains, a major function of which they consider to be 'the construction and assertion, or "articulation" of identity' (Gibson & Besley 2004:8).

Considering the thesis assemblage from the concept of public art, and the

forms these take, directs the perspective of contemporary relevance and ASSI identity to considerations of construction and portrayal of the ASSI in memorials, and how these portrayals symbolise or intersect with contemporary themes of Islander, and indeed, of Australian identity.

## 7.2 Public Art

Public art is art in any media that has been planned and executed with the intention of being staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. Public art is significant within the art world, amongst curators, commissioning bodies and practitioners of public art, to whom it signifies a working practice of site specificity, community involvement and collaboration. Public art may include any art which is exhibited in a public space including publicly accessible buildings, but often it is not that simple. Rather, the relationship between the content and audience, what the art is saying and to whom, is just as important if not more important than its physical location (Knight 2008).

According to this definition, purpose built memorials can be considered under this umbrella terminology, and are often listed on council websites as public art. However, to typify public memory objects as public art is 'to ... [ignore] the social value of their construction as part of community identity either in the historical past or in current commemoration or promotion' (Lennon 2006:122). This is a valid argument as Young's 1993 study of holocaust memorials determined that creative intention operates to the contrary; that 'most of the contemporary artists commissioned to design memorials remain answerable to both art and memory' (Young 1993:8). In other words, art can be used in conjunction with historical themes to produce public memory sites, but to consider the artistic merit as primary is perhaps to miss the underlying historical memory content.

Indeed, art works in public spaces play such a significant role in local environments that 'since the late 1970s public art programs have become a

central part of [Queensland] government community cultural development ... and policy initiatives for festivals, cultural tourism and public art' (Gibson and Besley 2004:213). However, Lennon asserts that '[d]espite legislation to promote public art and to conserve cultural heritage, there is little public understanding of the layered history and its evidence as heritage in the cultural landscape (Lennon 2006:123). Memorials as public art then, are 'a reflection of how we see the world – the artist's response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are' (Association for Public Art 2016). In this way, the portrayal of ASSI (hi)stories through artistic expression are important components of understanding local community evolutions as well as active facets of current community identity construction.

The thesis data show various formation arrangements in the creation of memory sites. Differing degrees of naturalism, abstraction and aestheticism in the forms of accuracy of details, conceptual references and artistic licence are employed at each location. Arguably, all sites carry some degree of each, from the 'naturalism' of the stone employed in a cairn or a wall, through the conceptual 'abstraction' of purpose resident in a commemorative anniversary marker to the 'aestheticism' of details, such as font choice or lettering on a simple wooden marker. An in-situ relict wagon track, however, is far removed from the sophistication and intent of commissioned installations of public art.


The six ASSI-related memory sites that resonate most obviously with an artistic presence were commissioned from artists, and include three metal

sculptures, two mosaic installations and a painted wall mural. Thematically they are evenly split between referencing the sugar industry or the ASSI historical event, with this binary continuing through anniversary and memory markers. All had major input from local governments and involved varying levels of instigation and financial sponsorship. This demonstrates that public art does indeed hold aesthetic and historical values in town planning due to its ability to construct local identity through publicly accessible claims of historical connections to place.

Bowen's extensive collection of wall murals for example, involve a number of stakeholders over a period of years in their creation. The original idea, borrowed from an international community's history keeping efforts, has expanded into a local tourism drawcard for the area as advertised in the following excerpt from Bowen tourism:

#### Murals

The first of Bowen's 27 Murals was painted in 1988, on the wall of the Bowen Library, located on Herbert Street. The idea behind the murals belonged to a former Bowen resident. She came up with the idea on her visit to Chemainus in Canada, where the town's historical past was shown in wall murals. Bowen's diverse history- from the early settlement, through the various industries of the region, to the present time, comes to life through paintings by many well-known artists. Most of the murals are located within the town centre and come highly recommended as a must see (Tourism Bowen 2016).

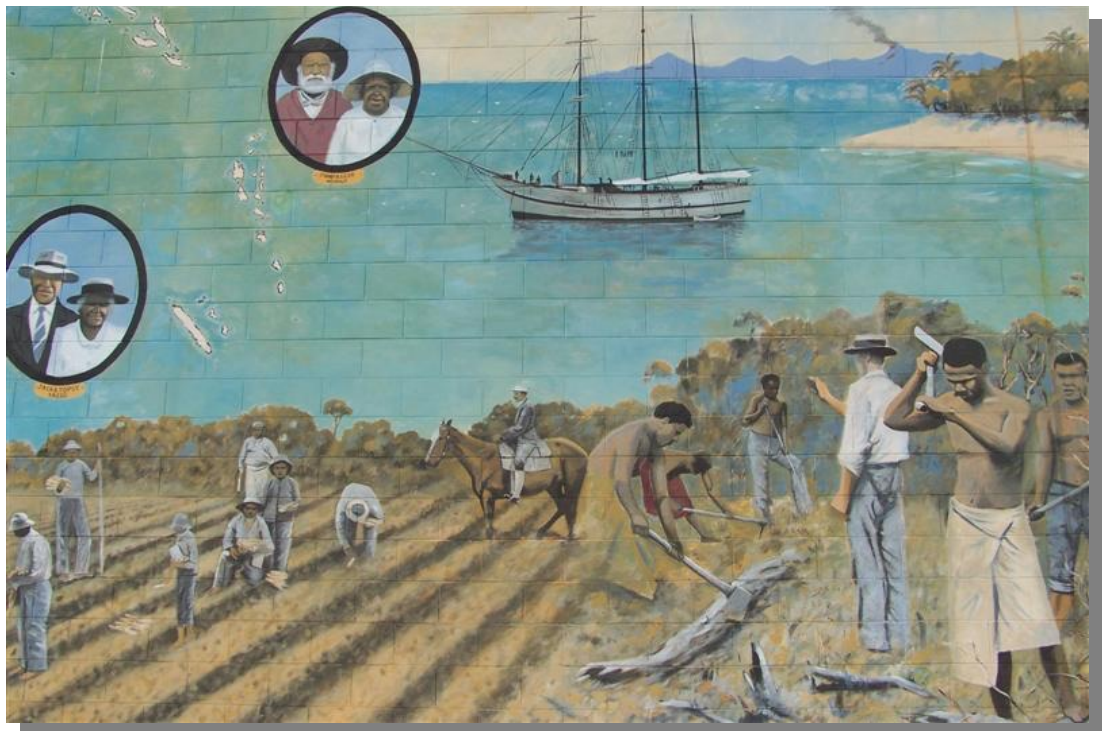
|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Name                    | <b>16. BOWEN SOUTH SEA ISLANDER MURAL</b>   |
| Location GPS data       | -20 00.91 +148 14.67  |
| Street Address          | Supermarket car park wall in Williams Street, Bowen 4805  |
| Date Recorded           | 07/05/2013  |
| Place Category          | Town, central   |
| Form / style / fabric   | Painted mural on shop wall  |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | Painted by Glen Gillard. Project sponsored by a grant from the Gaming Authority   |
| Dedication Date         | October/November 1998   |
| Theme(s)                | ASSI cultural heritage, community, people, public art   |
| Inscription             | The names of the two SSI couples cameoed in the painting comprise the only inscription on this mural. They are: <i>Tomas and Topsy Yasso</i> , and Jim and <i>Lizzie Womald</i> .   |
| Notes/ Sources          | Bowen has 19 centrally located mural sites. Eighteen of the murals depict Bowen's early history. Sixteen of the murals were commissioned by the Bowen Shire Festival of Murals Society, a local group dedicated to putting Bowen's history on display. The murals were painted by well known Queensland artists. The South Sea Islander stories and people portrayed are of real events and people with descendants still in the area. (Whitsunday Regional Council)<br>Image courtesy of <a href="http://www.robcaz.net/bowen.htm">http://www.robcaz.net/bowen.htm</a> |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | good  |
| Access and amenities    | Located in central business district, wheelchair accessible. Toilets nearby.  |

**Figure 7.2: Bowen South Sea Islander Mural**

Eighteen of the murals depict Bowen's early history with sixteen having been commissioned by the Bowen Shire Festival of Murals Society, a local group

dedicated to putting Bowen's history on display. The ASSI mural was painted on the wall of a local supermarket by artist Glen Gillard in 1998 with the project sponsored by a grant from the gaming authority which distributes revenue from gaming taxes to various not-for-profit community groups throughout Queensland.

This indicates that the generation of this mural was deemed of such high significance to the community as to pass through several stages of planning and justification, from historical worth to financial investment and finally artistic design and implementation. Illustrating elements of the fledgling sugar cane industry, the detail includes a recruiting ship sailing towards Australia from an island shoreline, Islanders clearing, planting and harvesting cane and the barracks accommodations in which they lived, complete with chickens to supplement their food. In effect, it represents a large slice of the early history of Islander presence in Australia. The names of two SSI couples are cameoed in the painting and comprise the only inscription on this mural. These two families are well known in the locality, which serves to connect and represent the descendant community in the saga, completing the ASSI historical origins message.



**Figure 7.3: Close up of local identities cameos on Bowen wall mural (Image courtesy <http://www.robcaz.net/bowen.htm> )**

This mural establishes Islander participation in regional history, reinforcing their validity in the community on a daily basis as people pass about their business. In this way, '[t]he artist combines this information about society and the physical world to create a piece of material culture that is not a representation of the physical world, but a representation of varied information about the world and its relationships' (Martin 2013:67).


A particular strength of the Bowen mural artworks as a means to disseminate local (hi)stories is their intimate relationship with local people. Painted by well known Queensland artists, they portray real events and people whose descendants still reside in the area. Also, they contribute to the town's public



face and therefore the process of continual memory making for new audiences, particularly as part of an established tourist trail. This makes them active not only as signifiers of versions of the past, but also as interactive components of the present.

Another example of the significance accorded to public art as conveyor of historical memory and part of community identity is found at Gordonvale in the form of the 'Sugar - Nature's Sweet Gift' mosaic memorial.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>5. GORDONVALE MOSAIC - 'SUGAR - NATURE'S SWEET GIFT'</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -17 05.54 +145 47.19   |
| Street Address         | Norman Park, Norman Street, Gordonvale 4865  |
| Date Recorded          | 11/07/2012 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Public Park, central   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Artistic ceramic mosaic surround showing cane workers at labour  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Designed and laid by Artbusters of Brisbane, Commissioned by the Friends of Gordonvale who also jointly funded it with the Mulgrave Central Mill in their Centenary Year, CSR Sugar Mill Group, The Queensland Government Arts Grant Programme and The Cane growers Cairns District. |
| Dedication Date        | 22/04/1995   |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, industry, public art, anniversary   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Inscription             | <p>SUGAR - NATURE'S SWEET GIFT<br/>         CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HISTORY<br/>         OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN THIS AREA.<br/>         THIS MOSAIC WAS JOINTLY FUNDED BY<br/>         THE MULGRAVE CENTRAL MILL CO.LTD.<br/>         IN THEIR CENTENARY YEAR<br/>         CSR SUGAR MILLS GROUP FOR THEIR<br/>         CONTRIBUTION<br/>         TO THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN<br/>         FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND<br/>         THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ARTS GRANT<br/>         PROGRAMME<br/>         THE FRIENDS OF GORDONVALE ASSN.<br/>         INCORPORATED<br/>         CANEGROWERS CAIRNS DISTRICT<br/>         "A PROJECT OF THE FRIENDS OF GORDONVALE"<br/>         22ND DAY OF APRIL 1995</p> |
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>MA Themed Technology, sub-themed Industry.<br/>         The mosaic surrounds the Cane Pioneer statue, and<br/>         commemorates 100 years of the sugar industry in the area.</p>  |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Good condition in council maintained park but some pieces of mosaic missing in parts   |
| Access and amenities    | Central location in Gordonvale village, wheelchair accessible and public conveniences nearby   |

**Figure 7.4: Gordonvale mosaic - 'SUGAR - NATURE'S SWEET GIFT'**

Creatively surrounding the cane farmer statue (figure 4.4, site 4 and figure 7.5 below) which honours the pioneers of the Mulgrave sugar industry, this art work was designed and deployed by Artbusters of Brisbane in 1995 (figure 7.4 above). In contrast to the Bowen mural's theme, which focuses on the ASSI historical event, the mosaic celebrates 100 years of the sugar industry in the area. Where the mural may be construed to deal with the

contentious aspects of the indenture event in a less confronting manner than weighted narratives, the mosaic may well be seen to represent the fractured aspects of the sugar industry's formative years. However, both mural and mosaic depict ASSI-related pasts in relatively positive portrayals due to their particular stylistic choices which present aesthetically pleasing profiles of consequence as opposed to renditions of exploited labourers.



**Figure 7.5: Cane farmer statue and mosaic, Gordonvale (Author's photo 21 June 2016)**

Again involving multiple sponsors, the mosaic inscription says more about the evolution of the sugar industry through the list of invested stakeholders than it does about the historical or artistic content:

SUGAR - NATURE'S SWEET GIFT  
CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF HISTORY  
OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN THIS AREA.  
THIS MOSAIC WAS JOINTLY FUNDED BY  
THE MULGRAVE CENTRAL MILL CO.LTD.  
IN THEIR CENTENARY YEAR  
CSR SUGAR MILLS GROUP FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN  
FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND  
THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT ARTS GRANT PROGRAMME  
THE FRIENDS OF GORDONVALE ASSN. INCORPORATED  
CANEGROWERS CAIRNS DISTRICT  
“ A PROJECT OF THE FRIENDS OF GORDONVALE ”  
22ND DAY OF APRIL 1995

The attention from high profile sponsors, as well as local interest groups to fund and be publicly acknowledged on this memorial demonstrates the importance of historical memory to the present. Neatly sidestepping historical narrative, the mosaic is unmistakably memorial, even without the one line overarching *raison d'être* 'celebrating 100 years of history of the sugar industry in this area'. This mosaic is the perfect accompaniment to the cane farmer statue it surrounds which simply reads, 'THIS STATUE WAS

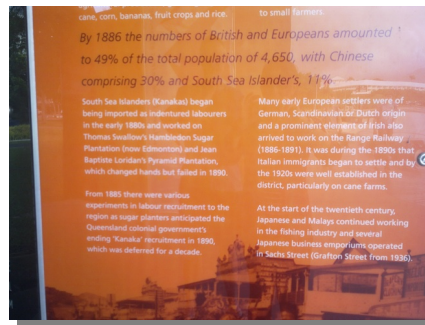
BEQUEATHED BY THE ESTATES OF CHARLIE AND MAY CROSSLAND TO HONOUR THE PIONEERS OF THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IN THE MULGRAVE AREA.' Again, without extended narrative, together the statue and mosaic in their central location form an eye-catching centre piece demanding present day attention.

### 7.3 Interpretive Boards and Statues

Five of the thesis memory sites found the need for such substantial explanatory text that they were classified as interpretive boards. Taking the form of metal plaques at Fishery Falls and Maryborough, shelter sheds at Cairns Esplanade and Yasso Point, and a museum display at Mourilyan, these boards all deal with the ASSI historical event and its connection to the sugar industry.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>3. CAIRNS ESPLANADE INTERPRETIVE NODE - CULTURAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -16 55.00 +145 46.50   |
| Street Address         | Cairns Promenade on Cairns Esplanade   |
| Date Recorded          | 13/04/2012 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Public Park, Waterfront ocean  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Roofed, free-standing, metal and glass shelter   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Cairns Regional Council  |
| Dedication Date        | Promenade project completed March 2003   |
| Theme(s)               | Cultural heritage, people, industry  |
| Inscription            | <p>By 1886 the numbers of British and Europeans amounted to 49% of the total population of 4,650, with Chinese comprising 30% and South Sea Islander's,(sic) 11%.</p> <p>South Sea Islanders (Kanakas) began being imported as indentured labourers in the early 1880s and worked on Thomas Swallow's Hambledon Sugar Plantation (now Edmonton) and Jean Baptiste Loridan's Pyramid Plantation, which changed hands but failed in 1890.</p> <p>From 1885 there were various experiments in labour recruitment to the region as sugar planters anticipated the Queensland colonial government's ending 'Kanaka' recruitment in 1890, which was deferred for a decade.</p> |
| Notes/ Sources         | One of three purpose built interpretive nodes, covering local heritage, cultural and environmental themes.   |

Image



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Well maintained by Cairns Council  |
| Access and amenities    | Central Cairns position with wheelchair access and public conveniences nearby. |

**Figure 7.6: Example of interpretive board, Cairns Esplanade**

The paragraphs that comprise the reference to South Sea Islanders on the interpretive 'node' at the major tourist area of Cairns Esplanade (figure 7.6 above), demonstrate the difficulties some local councils face when trying to include ASSI (hi)story at all. The very need for the extended communication space that interpretive boards provide, indicates the complexity of dealing with the entangled and contentious historical nature of the ASSI presence in Australia. To present this in a balanced, concise and artistic fashion in a public memory space presents increasing challenges as communities develop to include broader social and political egalitarian principles. As Pasztory argues regarding the cognitive significance of art, 'their basic forms and intentions are determined by their position in the socio cultural situation ... they always reflect the specific social context in which [they were] created and as societies become more complex, their art becomes more rarefied' (Pasztory 2005:254). So too with ASSI-related sites, as the unfolding tale of the seemingly simple statue in honour of Robert Towns, the man after whom Townsville was named in 1866 demonstrates.





**Figure 7.7: Robert Towns statue, Townsville, QLD (Author's photo 10 May 2013)**

Listed as public art by the Townsville City Council, the bronze cast statue of Robert Towns was sculpted in 2005 by Jane Hawkins. Situated predominantly in the central business district of Townsville, far north Queensland's largest city, the small plaque attached reads:



### **Robert Towns**

This commemorative statue in bronze of Robert Towns was initiated and funded by Townsville CBD Promotions, designed and created by artist Jane Hawkins in 2004, and unveiled by Councillor Jack Wilson on 18 May 2005.

A haughty and commanding countenance peruses passersby, as eyeglass in hand, he keeps a watchful eye over downtown Townsville. An ubiquitous founding father statue, in the usual central location, the unusual addition of an accompanying interpretive board adds another dimension. Beginning with a précis of Towns' entrepreneurial achievements as a merchant sailor and speculator, the tone begins to change in the following paragraphs:

Towns established Queensland's first cotton plantation at Logan River. He contracted South Sea Island labourers, bringing several hundred to the colony from 1863. By 1865 Towns' northern interests totalled a million hectares of pastoral land, 42 holdings in the Kennedy district alone.

He also financed the Cleveland Bay settlement established by partner John Melton Black. Without Towns' South Sea Islanders their enterprise would have failed. By hand the Islanders removed rocks barring Ross Creek, cleared the mangroves, tilled the plantations and cut the road through Thornton's Gap, linking the port to the hinterland.

The addition of an interpretive board with the inclusion and acknowledgement of a pivotal subaltern labour backstory is quite unusual. A mere statement of

facts so far, the Islanders are acknowledged for their role in a part of Towns' personal success story. The final paragraph throws the story into upheaval though, as it thrusts the whole ASSI event squarely at the feet of the viewer, complete with incendiary key words representing complex controversial issues:

**Visionary or villain?**

Historians are divided. Industrious, thrifty and merciless described his business philosophy. Paternalistic but well intentioned has been the judgement on the contract labour issue. Controversy has plagued the name of Robert Towns both during and after his lifetime. Detractors called him "Godfather of the slave trade". His reputation would have been more substantial without the unfounded rumours of "Blackbirding".



**Figure 7.8: Robert Towns statue with interpretive board, Townsville (Author's photo 10 May 2013)**

Visionary or villain? How does a provocative question such as this attach

itself to the memorial statue of a city's most significant personage? And what does this indicate about the role of memory places? Traditionally memorials instruct the viewer with a version of what to remember, not confront them with a quandary regarding a notable subject and, by extension, a city's existential history. With a collision of naturalism in the life sized figure of the man, abstraction in dealing with the contentious ideas behind the events, and aestheticism in tying it all together in a visually balanced statue, plinth and interpretive plaque, the Robert Towns memory site impacts the present day with its very presence, stimulating an interest in the past and opening public debates with more questions than answers.

However, the original intention was only for the founding father statue to proudly acknowledge Townsville's historical provenance. Even in 2004, merely as a result of the *proposal* to erect the statue, controversy reigned as 'claims that Robert Towns was a "blackbirder" responsible for bringing South Seas Islanders to work as slaves on Queensland plantations were debated on the ABC radio programme, Radio National (AusPostalHistory). Four months after the statue's unveiling in 2005, national radio continued to debate the issue of 'Townsville Slavery' as the following transcript details:

MARK HIDES, REPORTER: [A] recent tribute has stirred tensions about Towns' roll (sic) in the slave trade. A statue of him unveiled in the city has unsettled Pastor Alan Johnson and other South Sea Islanders.

PASTOR ALAN JOHNSON, SOUTH SEA ISLANDER: This whole city is representative of what has oppressed and has destroyed a lot of the

fabric of south sea island society through the black birding days and if its not brought to the attention of people in this town I don't [think] people are going to be able to walk around here with a clear conscience.

PASTOR ALAN JOHNSON: It does bother me every morning when I wake up that I know that I live in a town that's been represented and has been named after you know a man that's been associated with blackbirding.

MARK HIDES: He's not alone in his criticism. Member for Townsville Mike Reynolds says he wouldn't have built it if he still steered the Council ship.

MIKE REYNOLDS, MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE: You know the very bitter times that south sea islanders went through in terms of being forcefully removed from the South Sea Islands and brought to sugar fields for free labour. That really does go back a long long time and I think in many ways putting the Robert Towns statue there is really opening a festering sore.

MARK HIDES: Despite the criticism, the Townsville City Council says it doesn't regret agreeing to the statue. Cr. Jack Wilson says it's appropriate because the city is named after Robert Towns.

JACK WILSON, TOWNSVILLE CITY COUNCIL: We've made it very clear from the plaque at the statue that he remains a controversial figure and he will forever and a day. Over 162,000 white people were sent to Australia under the British whip. We've sort of forgiven the British for this and it's about time the South Sea Islanders forgive and forgave and that we work together to build a better future for all people (ABC Stateline Radio Transcript 2005).

Although the final comment, likening the idea of kidnapping Islanders as

slave labour to Australia's convict history, is perhaps missing the point, this broadcast conversation, and the memory issues it addresses, reinforce and illustrate several crucial concepts regarding ASSI-related memory places:

- that intention and reception of a memorial's message may be substantially discrete;
- that a memory site's meaning is interpreted through personalised perspectives;
- that memory sites are not static objects, but actively interact with the present;
- that memory sites are able to contest established historical narratives;
- that public memory is flexible and able to incorporate alternative (hi)stories;
- that absence as well as presence in the memory narrative creates meaning; and
- that memory sites reflect the specific social context in which they are created.

Further, this situation indicates that Islanders are beginning to find a voice regarding their own past in the public forum, both in addressing contentious issues as illustrated in radio coverage, and in having this addressed, as shown by the reconciliatory tone of the text on the interpretive board. Of particular interest is the way that the ongoing contention between differing versions of the ASSI past are dealt with in the on-site text. Rather than taking

a stance, or opposing viewpoints against each other, both sides are blended in the dialogue with the establishment of the sugar industry credited to both entrepreneurial skills and Islander labour, and the recruitment controversy acknowledged and offered to the viewer to ponder.

However, the final line of the interpretive board speaks to another thesis discussion point, that of the use of 'weighted' words in memorial texts. The line in question reads: 'His reputation would have been more substantial without the unfounded rumours of "Blackbirding"'. Perhaps a more appropriate word to 'unfounded' would be the word 'unproven'. The controversy thickens with the following conclusions from Professor Kennedy and Dr. Hunt, historians at James Cook University, Cairns who researched the historiographical evidence surrounding the blackbirding allegations:

KETT KENNEDY: He (Robert Towns) covered his back there's no doubt about that.

DR DOUG HUNT, HISTORIAN: In terms of any personal involvement Robert Towns was NOT a blackbirder, but I think that he wasn't quite so naive about what was going on in recruiting islanders as has been said in that report.

MARK HIDES, REPORTER: The historians say while Towns may not have boarded the labour ships bound for the Islands, his employees definitely did going on recruiting missions in search of cheap labour. Dr Doug Hunt says Towns recruited Ross Lewin to oversee recruitment.

DR DOUG HUNT: Towns was very careful in the instructions he wrote to Ross Lewin and to his ships Captains about how they were to treat the

islanders kindly, how they weren't to take any advantage of them. However I think he was also carefully crafting those letters with a view to his reputation and perhaps posterity's view of him. (ABC Stateline Radio Transcript 2005).

This prompts the question, does the past construct the present, or the present construct the past? Whether Towns did actively 'cover his tracks' to create an imagined future for his memory, or even if he was simply saving his own skin in a time of anti-slavery legislations, memory of him is certainly having an effect on the present. Ironically, this has been through bringing the very issues he tried to hide into the contemporary public forum, motivating public discussion, protest action and provoking local and national consideration of the very foundations of their society.

Concurrently however, present day attention focused on Towns' memory is constructing an alternative view of his character and bringing to the surface long suppressed colonial misdemeanours. This, in effect, is re-creating a past different from that accepted in established public historical narratives. In this way, both past and present appear to be constructing each other as the past informs public memory about the making of the present and the present remakes the established past. Only time will tell how both will journey into, and perhaps continue to construct, the future. Eight years later, in 2013, the issue is still far from settled with members of the ASSI community holding a silent protest at the Towns statue on the 150 year anniversary of the first recruitment ship to arrive in Australia, the *Don Juan*, owned by none other than Robert Towns.

The Towns memorial saga illustrates the importance of recognising the role of archaeology in managing cultural heritage resources, including memory sites, on behalf of entire communities, even when this may challenge existing orthodox representations. The notion of the statue alone provoked memory controversies, indicating that for ASSI-related memory sites what is portrayed or presented is less crucial than what this represents to a particular audience. The Towns statue shows that '[i]t is the combination of the original meaning of the piece together with its contemporary significance or its cultural importance to a particular Queensland community that makes an artwork or outdoor cultural object socially significant' (Gibson and Besley 2004:165). A primary socially significant aspect of the controversy surrounding the Robert Towns statue is that of opening the public narrative about the ASSI past and raising awareness of how that past has constructed local identity in the present.

However, although the Islanders are included in the history of Townsville at this important memory site, which is a positive step for their overall inclusion in the historical narrative, the focus is on the negative conjectural fracas surrounding recruitment details, and the early period of their indenture, which had ceased by 1906. This can be explained, in this case, by the memorial being connected to the colonial personage of Towns, and so centering around his exploits in this time frame. This observation does prompt consideration regarding the ways that Islanders are portrayed in the broader



thesis assemblage, with the most overarching ASSI identity theme following suit, manifesting as an alignment with the indenture event, in the form of disenfranchised labourers in the colonial sugar industry. A distinctly redolent method of portraying this particular identity for ASSI memorial is via statues of sugar workers. The thesis assemblage includes two associated life sized cane cutters, at Gordonvale and Innisfail (discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6); two stylised metal sculptures that include cane cutters at Mossman and Childers, and two dedicated life size likenesses at Point Vernon and Mackay. '[T]he defining feature of memorials to cane cutters is their figurative nature; these memorials are evocative of the physical labour of canecutting' (Gibson & Besley 2004:126). This emphasis on labour is particularly insidious in the portrayal of an ASSI identity, in effect commodifying the Islanders, and has the effect of obscuring more culturally specific aspects of ASSI people. Further, the cane cutter iconography is also highly gendered, since only male labour is given value although women also participated in the field work. In this way the Islanders are reduced to market units in a way as representing the fundamental part of the process.

## 7.4 Stylised Metal Cane Cutter Sculptures

A perfect example of the social values attached to such memorials is the stylised cane cutter metal sculpture that is the backdrop for Mossman's public playground. Set against the waving cane fields flowing into the distance, it serves multiple purposes as public art, landmark icon for the town and place marker of their centenary of Federation time capsule.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>1. MOSSMAN CANE CUTTERS MEMORIAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -16 27.47 +145 22.34   |
| Street Address         | George Davis Park, Foxton Ave. Mossman, 4873   |
| Date Recorded          | 01/04/2012 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Public park, urban   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal sculpture  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Steven Fischer, Ben Jenkins artist, for Douglas Shire Council  |
| Dedication Date        | 9/10/2001  |
| Theme(s)               | People, industry, public art, anniversary  |
| Inscription            | Centenary of Federation Time Capsule<br>Buried at Midday<br>9th October 2001<br>To Be Opened 9th October 2051  |
| Notes/ Sources         | MA Themed Technology, sub themed Industry<br>The sculpture was funded by Douglas Shire Council and manufactured locally by Steven Fischer. It was created by local artist Ben Jenkins specifically for the Centenary of Federation Celebrations which attracted over 5,000 people on September 4th 2001. There is a plaque at the bottom of the sculpture and a time capsule was buried at the same time which is due to be opened in 2051.<br><a href="http://www.newsport.com.au/Ask-Julia.6175.0.html">http://www.newsport.com.au/Ask-Julia.6175.0.html</a> |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Image                   |      |
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Good - in well maintained council park   |
| Access and amenities    | Walking distance of Mossman town, wheelchair accessible and public conveniences nearby |

**Figure 7.9: Mossman Cane Cutters Memorial**

This memorial represents the flavour of this sugar town with its visual reference to the sugar industry through the figurative cane worker. The memorial is located in a well patronised area of Mossman, at a landscaped recreation area across from the local church. Attracting usage by locals, it is also a picturesque lay-by area for travellers on the major arterial road heading north through town. The official opening of this memorial and the burial of the associated time capsule in 2001 shows the importance of memory strategies such as this to the local community, as an estimated 5000 people attended. Considering that Mossman had a population of only 1,732 people ten years later in the 2011 census, this memorial ceremony was a huge draw card for the extended local community.

The communal placement and interest in this memorial, coupled with its sponsorship by the Douglas Shire council and local design and manufacture show that the entire memorial package holds specific worth to the Mossman community. Through this memorial then, the contemporary relevance of this area's past to their community identity is displayed and obviously holds specific societal values. Added to this is its design purpose to hold significance well into the future, as the marker of the community time capsule, which is due to be opened in 2051.


A second metal memorial sculpture featuring figurative cane cutters, this time specific to ASSI heritage, was installed 1500 kilometres away at Childers, in the same year. Again, this was in honour of the centenary of Federation celebrations, and again the theme of local history associated with the sugar industry was chosen. This memorial takes the form of two major installations, each with several separate constructions within them, spread across a public park in the central business district of Childers. Although the area and ASSI theme flows from one memory object to the other, the design features are distinct with one section dealing with the original recruitment story and the other with the indentured labour experience of cane workers. The former comprises metal totem poles to represent the masts of the sailing ships that brought the Islanders to Australia, with each pole featuring attached etched metal and printed plaques, one of which was discussed in chapter 5.



**Figure 7.10: South Sea Islander Totems, Childers (Author's photo 23 October 2013)**

The latter section comprises a series of full size three dimensional stylised metal sculptures of ASSI cane workers. Inscribed metal plaques attached to each describe the various processes of cane work in which the Islanders were involved. A family image and accompanying text written from the descendant perspective explains ASSI values and connections to their past and present in Australia. The transcriptions accompany the memorial photographs below (figure 7.11).

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Name              | <b>32. THE ISIS KANAKA STORY - CHILDERS</b> |
| Location GPS data | -25 14.17 +152 16.72                        |
| Street Address    | Millennium Park, Churchill Street, Childers |
| Date Recorded     | 23/10/2013 by JM                            |
| Place Category    | Public park, central                        |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Form / style / fabric   | Metal sculptured Artworks  |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | Isis Shire Council with ASSI community   |
| Dedication Date         | 01/12/2001   |
| Theme(s)                | Local history, ASSI cultural heritage, public art, anniversary   |
| Inscription             | <p>Two small plaques at Churchill Street frontage read:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">             ISIS<br/>             ISIS SHIRE<br/>             COUNCIL<br/>             THE ISIS KANAKA STORY<br/>             The artwork in the park tells the history<br/>             of the Isis Kanaka people.<br/>             The story begins with the totems near the<br/>             amenities building and concludes with<br/>             the sculptures by Churchill Street.<br/>             1901-2001<br/>             Centenary of Federation           </p> <p style="text-align: center;">             Queensland<br/>             Government<br/>             MILLENNIUM PARK<br/>             CHILDERS<br/>             Millennium Park was opened by the<br/>             Minister for Local Government and Planning<br/>             the Honourable Nita Cunningham MP<br/>             A joint Queensland government and<br/>             Isis Shire Council Project<br/>             1 December 2001<br/>             1901-2001<br/>             Centenary of Federation<br/>             Queensland           </p> |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | No MA Themed Culture, Sub-themed Community   |
| Current condition       | Good condition, central council maintained park  |
| Access and amenities    | Main street frontage, wheelchair access, public conveniences   |



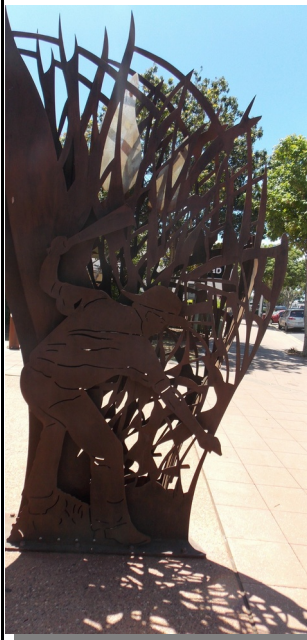


#### Family

The opening of the Kanaka Chapel on Ruddy's Hill on 13 February 1898 was attended by 230 Kanakas. Missionary John Thompson and his Islander assistants had significant influence on the Childers population. On the Centenary in 1998 a plaque was unveiled on the site commemorating the work of Mr Thompson.

We, the Australian South Sea Islanders, are proud of what our people accomplished. Although their lives had been entirely disrupted they left us examples of their faith, love, courage and strength. Their culture and oral history has been passed down, and is evident among our families today.

The Australian South Sea Islander people have fought for Australia in wartime, represented Australia on the sports field and excelled in business professions and the arts. We strive to make this land we call home a better place for our children.



#### Cutting the Cane

Before cane burning began the Kanakas cut the green sugar cane with a cane knife.

They stripped the cane by running the back of the knife down the sticks to remove the trash. The cane sticks were cut off at the tops and the ground and was put into bundles. Women were also used for this labour, which was hard and heavy work, with long days and little wages.



#### Lighting the Cane Fire

The later decision to burn the cane was made for economic and health reasons.

Burning removed cane trash before harvesting. Descendants of the Kanakas cut and bundled the burnt cane.

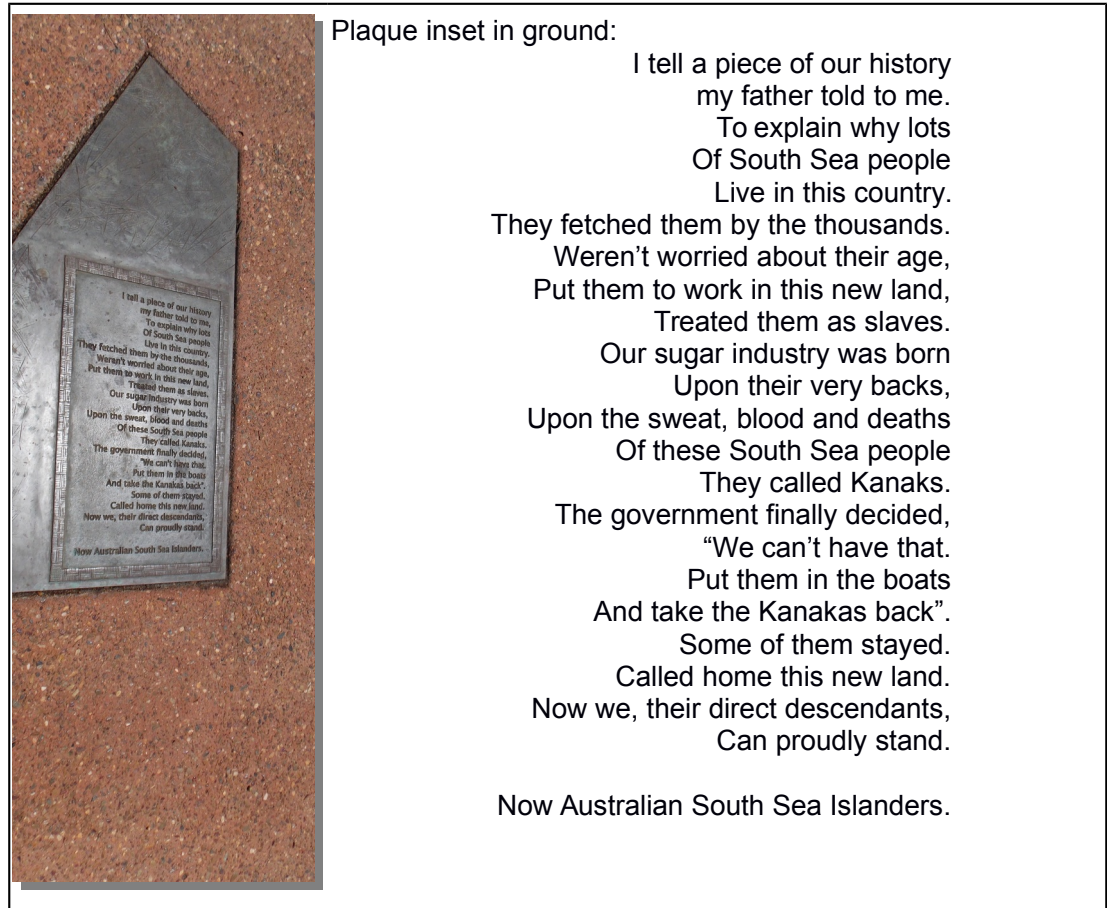
The cane was then transported to the sugar mills by steam driven locomotives.



#### Loading the Cane

The Kanakas loaded the bundles of cane onto horse drawn drays. The cane was then taken to the mill where it was refined into sugar.





**Figure 7.11: The Isis Kanaka Story - Childers**

Following through from the main street frontage, where the sculptural cane workers beckon from the edge of the footpath, the ASSI story moves from the Australian cane workers through the totem ships to the island homes.

The engraved totem inscriptions, illustrated with etched artworks, read almost as a cultural manifesto of idealised history when depicting lifestyles on the home islands, which contrasts markedly with the story of hardships that followed recruitment, journeys and lives in Australia. Designed to be interacted with, experienced much as the sequential pages of a book

narrative, the individual memory objects become an immersive expedition of discovery, drawing the viewer deeper into the web of the story.

|                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Name                   | <b>31. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER TOTEMS - CHILDERS</b>   |  |
| Location GPS data      | -25 14.16 +152 16.71  |  |
| Street Address         | Millennium Park, Churchill St. Childers   |  |
| Date Recorded          | 23/10/2013 by JM  |  |
| Place Category         | Public park, central  |  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal totem poles with etched and printed metal plaques attached.   |  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Isis Shire Council with ASSI community  |  |
| Dedication Date        | 2001  |  |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, people, local history   |  |
| Inscription 1          |  <p>The main island groups of origin of the Kanaka people were the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides and New Caledonia. These islands were surrounded by sandy beaches, beautiful cool, blue water, and were rich with animal and plant life.</p> <p>The word “Kanaka” was used to label the people who were “blackbirded” or kidnapped, and brought to Australia to work as slaves to establish the sugar plantations in Queensland.</p> <p>The South Sea Island people lived in grass huts and practiced very strong cultural traditions, with extended families living together. If parents were unable to care for their children, then grandparents, aunts or uncles would take on the parenting role. Everyone lived in harmony with each other.</p> |  |
| Inscription 2          | The Kanaka people came  |  |



from the South Sea Islands.

The island men were very good at craft and fishing. They made wooden canoes and bows and arrows to catch fish and hunt various animals.

The women worked the fertile ground planting fruits and vegetables such as taro, yam, sweet potato, mango and coconut. Grated coconut and coconut milk was used in cooking. Yams were painted with lime made from burnt shells and then stored for the season in grass huts.

The Kanakas brought many of these traditions, including fishing and gardening, with them to Queensland.

### Inscription 3



Boats of the traders carrying Kanakas arrived in the new colony of Queensland between 1863 and 1904.

European settlers planned to develop a sugar industry and needed people to clear and prepare the land. The land had never been farmed and was covered by heavy rainforest and scrub. The settlers believed they were not physically capable of working in the tropical heat. Convicts provided the first cheap labour to work farms, pastoral properties and sugar plantations.

Once transportation stopped, landowners sent ships to the South Sea Islands to obtain labour. Men, women, boys and girls were lured onto ships, or kidnapped from the beaches. Conditions on

board during the long journey were poor - the Kanakas were poorly fed, had no medical treatment, poor toilet facilities, and many women and girls were raped.

Inscription 4



When the trading ships arrived in Queensland, the Kanakas were dropped at the main ports of entry - Brisbane, Innisfail and Cairns.

Ships sailed between Fraser Island and Hervey Bay to journey up the Mary River to Maryborough where the Kanakas were unloaded. They were then transported by horse and dray to Childers.

Notes/ Sources

MA Themed Technology, sub-themed Agriculture  
The totems represent the masts of sailing ships in which South Sea Islanders were brought to Queensland

Image



Heritage Status Listing

No

Current condition

Good - well maintained by council in public park

Access and amenities

Main street frontage, wheelchair access, public conveniences

**Figure 7.12: South Sea Islander Totems - Childers**

The input from the ASSI community is at once explanatory, yet very personal, culminating in the final poetic plaque of familial and spatial belonging. There

is an obvious desire to share their perceived cultural qualities, perseverance and achievements, set against a profound sadness for their ancestors' struggles, yet pride of participation and connection to place, bringing to life Pasztory's claim that 'we make our things to match both our physical and mental needs, and because they resemble us they are concretisations of our thoughts' (Pasztory 2005:22).


For remembering the ASSI then, this memorial series can be understood as the material framework in which people can think through and communicate memories of past events and lived experiences, operating in the liminal spaces between history and memory. The memorials, as sites of memory, can thus be understood as physical manifestations of engagements between people and the material world, emerging as representations of human efforts to make sense of pasts and presents. Further, viewed in the light of on-going claims for recognition, the presence of these memorials as part of the contemporary landscape of Childers town centre, acts to pose provocative questions even as it indicates the emergent inclusion into local narratives. In particular, the stylised cane cutter figures tie the ASSI past to the contemporary present as they provide a part of the story to the street front that all members of the community can relate to in a bustling sugar town that still revolves around the sugar industry. This presents an identifiable entry point to the deeper messages that follow further into this memorial installation.

## 7.5 Naturalistic Statues

In the case of ASSI indenture (hi)story, the conceptual aspects of what has become difficult to confront about the contentious treatment of Islanders as a labour commodity, may be humanised through the non-human agency of statuary. Taking this concept further than the stylised cane cutter images mentioned above are the naturalistic statues to be found at Mackay and Point Vernon, Hervey Bay. The Mackay cane cutter memorial, unveiled in 1994, is particularly life like as it is based on a body cast taken from a local man, Mr Roly Viti, who is of both Solomon Island and Vanuatu heritage. The life size figurative metal sculpture is set on a cement plinth with polished granite plaques surrounding the base.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Name                                       | <b>20. MACKAY SOUTH SEA ISLANDER CANECUTTER MEMORIAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data                          | -21 09.81 +149 09.29  |
| Street Address                             | South Sea Islander Precinct, Regional Botanical Gardens, Nebo Road, Mackay 4740   |
| Date Recorded                              | 08/05/2013 by JM  |
| Place Category                             | Public park, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric                      | Life sized figurative metal sculpture on cement plinth with polished stone plaques  |
| Designer/ Builder Name                     | Artbusters, Brisbane - figure is based on a body cast of Mr Roly Viti, of dual Solomon Island and Vanuatu heritage. The Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islander Association initiated the project and raised money towards the sculpture. A local firm of stonemasons erected the plinth and a group of South Sea Islanders set stones into the base, which contains a time capsule with information about local families. (Gibson & Besley,2004;128) |
| Dedication Date<br>(on inscription plaque) | This monument<br>was unveiled by<br>His Worship the Mayor<br>Councillor GORDON S. WHITE<br>Sunday 27th November, 1994   |



|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Theme(s)                      | ASSI cultural heritage, industry  |
| Inscription<br>(Plaque one)   | <p>In Memory of<br/>the Original<br/>SOUTH SEA ISLAND<br/>PIONEERS<br/>For their contribution<br/>towards the establishment<br/>of the<br/>SUGAR INDUSTRY<br/>in the<br/>Mackay District</p> <p>Erected by<br/>THE SOUTH SEA ISLAND<br/>DESCENDANTS<br/>with support from the Community</p> |
| Inscription<br>(Plaque two)   | <p>Decorated South Sea map, with dolphins and hibiscus<br/>flowers,</p> <p>NEW BRITAIN<br/>SOLOMON ISLANDS<br/>FIJI ISLANDS<br/>VANUATU<br/>FIJI ISLANDS<br/>LOYALTY ISLANDS<br/>MACKAY</p>   |
| Inscription<br>(Plaque three) | Flags of AUSTRALIA, FIJI ISLANDS, LOYALTY ISLANDS,<br>NEW BRITAIN, SOLOMON ISLANDS, and VANUATU   |
| Notes/ Sources                | <p>MA themed Technology, sub-themed Agriculture<br/>MA has 'actual monument dedication date as 16/06/2005 and<br/>approx. monument dedication date as 1994 also as designed<br/>by Artbusters</p>   |
| Image                         |   |
| Heritage Status Listing       | No  |
| Current condition             | Excellent, well maintained surrounds.   |
| Access and amenities          | Transport necessary, wheelchair accessible, toilets nearby  |

**Figure 7.13: Mackay South Sea Islander Canecutter Memorial**



The Mackay and District Australian South Sea Islander Association initiated the erection of this memorial statue, and raised money from the wider community to achieve it. A local firm of stonemasons erected the plinth and a group of South Sea Islanders set stones into the base, which contains a time capsule with information about local families (Gibson & Besley 2004:128). The information on the plaques surrounding the base is clear, precise and inclusive, connecting the Mackay Islanders to both their Australian heritage and to their home islands. The wording also links them to the local past, as part of the establishment team of the sugar industry and also to the local present as part of the community.

A second, particularly naturalistic statue is installed at the Polson Cemetery, Point Vernon, Hervey Bay. Situated in the South Sea Islander section of the cemetery, it was erected in 1972 to pay tribute to, and mark 55 otherwise unmarked Islander graves. The life sized sculpture of an Islander against a backdrop of tall cane plants, knife in one hand and dead companion in the other, paints an emotive picture in the fitting arena of the cemetery. Apart from the small brass plaque attached to the plinth (inscription below fig 7.14) there is a simple painted slab in front with the words 'Dara Lata' which mean 'It's been a long road'.

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>34. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER (KANAKA) MEMORIAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -25 15.17 +152 48.82   |
| Street Address         | Polson Cemetery, Corser Street, Point Vernon, Hervey Bay   |
| Date Recorded          | 23/10/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Burial ground, urban   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Rendered Clay Sculpture on Stone Plinth  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Leo Favell (funded by OPAL Hervey Bay and state govt subsidy)  |
| Dedication Date        | 1972   |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, industry, graves marker (marks 55 unmarked SSI graves)   |
| Inscription            | <p>To the Memory of<br/>all South Sea Islanders<br/>brought to Queensland<br/>as conscript labourers<br/>to work in cotton and<br/>sugar cane fields<br/>1863 - 1906<br/>May their toil be not forgotten.<br/>Erected by Hervey Bay<br/>O.P.A.L. (One People of Australia League)</p>  |
| Notes/ Sources         | <p>MA Themed Culture, sub-themed Community</p> <p>Frasercoast Council Description<br/>Located in the Polson Cemetery this memorial is a tribute to all Kanakas brought to Queensland to work on cane and cotton plantations.<br/>Between 1863 and 1906, an estimated 50,000 Islanders were brought to Queensland. About 12,000 of these were brought to the Maryborough/Hervey Bay area.<br/><a href="http://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/parks-and-gardens?">http://www.frasercoast.qld.gov.au/parks-and-gardens?</a></p> |

Image



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Good condition in maintained cemetery.                  |
| Access and amenities    | On public transport system, wheelchair access possible. |

**Figure 7.14: South Sea Islander (KANAKA) Memorial**

The use of cane cutter figures, both stylised and naturalistic, portray a distinct aspect of ASSI identity, associating them with the labouring indenture event. Therefore, although Islander representation in the sugar industry is often subsumed by the 'Europeanness' of associated material culture and the general economic changes represented by infrastructure, creating a connection through figurative language can foreground ASSI participation and experience in the colonial foundations of the nation. In this way local public memory must expand from Eurocentric sugar industry stories as a formative 'root' of Queensland's identity to include the role of ASSI people in that foundation. Therefore, statuary of this type has the potential to disrupt certain conventional ideas about what constitutes the actual historic background of local communities and the nation. In effect then, these ASSI

memorials function to perform cultural work, through their form, and to raise awareness of confrontational histories.

The Point Vernon memorial is particularly important in this regard, as not only is it the earliest memorial in the thesis assemblage to be erected in direct memory of the Islander cane workers (1972), and quite possibly in the country, it was also intended as ‘a “step towards reparation” of the harm caused by blackbirding’ (Gill 1977:13). Commissioned by The One People of Australia League, which was established in 1961 as an Aboriginal advancement organisation based in Queensland, this memorial therefore marks a significant turning point in public memory as an awareness of the previously overlooked past of ASSI people in the country is acknowledged in a public forum in physical format. Indeed, the emergence of the *concept* of reparation and memorialisation towards South Sea Islanders at this early date is particularly significant, since this was 22 years prior to any formal recognition of ASSI people by the Commonwealth Government (which occurred in 1994) and 28 years before they were recognised by the Queensland Government in 2000. This indicates a ‘bottom up’ spread of public memory, beginning in the local communities and working towards the hierarchy, who may then ratify official acceptance of a specific historical narrative via legislative recognition and enact it symbolically via inclusion of that recognition in the public memory sphere. However, there is a difference in terminology between stakeholder group instigators and government council organisations in precisely what these may symbolise.

Where the OPAL group's intention in 1972 was towards 'reparation', which literally means to make amends, a second local religious community group at Buderim in 2009 used the words 'reconciliation' in their symbolic memorial ceremony, which means to reunite, and make friendly.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>36. BUDERIM RECONCILIATION AT ST MARKS</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -26 41.09 +153 03.25  |
| Street Address         | Main Street Buderim, QLD.   |
| Date Recorded          | 14/04/2016  |
| Place Category         | Landscape, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal plaque on rock  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Local church and community group  |
| Dedication Date        | 21/11/2009  |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, community, reconciliation  |
| Inscription            | In recognition of an act of repentance<br>for past injustices towards<br>Aboriginal and Pacific Islander<br>people on Buderim<br>"...for the healing of the land and its people"<br>21st November 2009  |
| Notes/ Sources         | A sorry service was held on 21st November, 2009 recognising the past injustices to Aboriginal and Pacific Islander people. It was a collaboration between St Marks (rector Archdeacon Richard Gowty and curate Rev Dr Cathy Laufer) and Buderim SAILS (Coordinator Heather Johnston) with no formal Indigenous input. A small plaque fixed to a rocky outcrop was unveiled<br>( <a href="http://indigenousandssi.buderim.com/project/reconciliation-at-st-marks/">http://indigenousandssi.buderim.com/project/reconciliation-at-st-marks/</a> ) |

Image



|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Heritage Status Listing | No               |
| Current condition       | Good             |
| Access and amenities    | Central location |

**Figure 7.15: Buderim Reconciliation At St Marks**

With the inscription ‘In recognition of an act of repentance for past injustices towards Aboriginal and Pacific Islander people on Buderim “...for the healing of the land and its people” 21st November 2009’, this plaque illustrates that reparations can be symbolic as well as material. In this case in the form of a public acknowledgement and apology for past injustices, the intention is most obviously towards community healing and recovery by including Aboriginal and Islander peoples in the memorial plaque. In this way, memory sites can open discourse about symbolic reparation in attempts to counter hegemonic colonial historic narratives. In contrast, and also in Buderim as part of a beautification plan in 1998, another local group, the croquet club, instigated a commemorative plaque to be installed in the main street to honour ASSI participation in the local community. Financed by the Maroochy council, the

wording is more specifically formulated around remembering, rather than reconciliation.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>38. BUDERIM SOUTH SEA ISLANDER MEMORIAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -26 41.13 +153 03.03  |
| Street Address         | Lindsay Road and Main Street Buderim, QLD.  |
| Date Recorded          | 14/04/2016  |
| Place Category         | Town, central   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Metal plaque set on stone wall  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Local government, Maroochy Shire Council  |
| Dedication Date        | Plaque ordered on 17/4/1998 and finalised on 30/7/1998  |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, industry, reconciliation   |
| Inscription            | <p style="text-align: center;">SOUTH SEA ISLANDER MEMORIAL<br/> In memory of the South Sea Islanders who<br/> worked in Buderim Mountain's early sugar<br/> industry clearing land, planting and harvesting.<br/> They were part of the 62,000 Kanakas recruited<br/> between 1863 and 1904.<br/> May they be honoured for their role in<br/> establishing the Queensland sugar industry<br/> Let their toil not be forgotten.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Donated by Maroochy Shire Council</p>  |
| Notes/ Sources         | <p>The plaque states that it was donated by Maroochy Shire Council which has since been subsumed into the Sunshine Coast Council. Council archives accessed through archive order number CRV1600196R on 18th and 19th May 2016, record the Buderim Croquet Club applied to have a South Sea Islander commemorative plaque instigated on 17th April 1998. This plaque order was completed by the council on 30th July 1998 as part of the Buderim beautification plan. Other records from this time were destroyed in 2009 by the council.</p> |



Image



|                         |                  |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Heritage Status Listing | No               |
| Current condition       | Well maintained  |
| Access and amenities    | Central location |

**Figure 7.16: Buderim South Sea Islander Memorial**

These three examples of reparation, reconciliation and remembering, originating from disparate local community groups, have all recognised and acted upon a perceived need to construct a public focus honouring an ASSI inclusion in their communities. This inclusion, in effect validation, created through a physical memorial, in lieu of a missing ASSI historical identity, which recognises Islander participation in local historical narratives. In this way the past is used to create a focused ASSI identity in and for the present. Another way that this becomes apparent in the cultural landscape is through the absorption of ASSI community members' names into local urban planning, as discussed previously at Yasso Point (chapter 5), and again at Chinderah's Corowa Park.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>40. CHINDERA COROWA PARK</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -28 14.46 +153 33.07  |
| Street Address         | Terrace Street and Chinderah Road, Corowa Park  |
| Date Recorded          | 13/04/2016  |
| Place Category         | Public park, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Memorial plaque set on post   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Local Government, Tweed Shire Council   |
| Dedication Date        | Official unveiling 30th August 1986   |
| Theme(s)               | People, local history, connection to place marker   |
| Inscription            | COROWA PARK   |
| Notes/ Sources         | <p>Corowa Park is named after the late Robert (Zane) Corowa, founding president of the first national body representing ASSI, established in Tweed Heads in 1975. His wife Phyllis Corowa also helped establish and opened the South Sea Island Cudgen burial ground at Chinderah cemetery in 1999.</p> <p>MA Themed People Sub-themed Indigenous.</p> <p>In the Tweed Heads area, Mr. Corowa was a driving force in many community organisations, especially the Twin Towns Pensioners Club. He was an inaugural committee member of the Tweed Heads Community Centre.</p> <p>At Saturday's Robert Corowa park dedication, family members of several generations joined his widow in a day of memories.</p> <p>At Corowa Park, Chinderah, from left, Tweed Shire deputy president, Cr. Tom Hogan, Mrs Phyllis Corowa, MLC Keith Enderbury and MLC Peter Watkins.</p> |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Image                   |  |
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |
| Current condition       | Well maintained public park area.  |
| Access and amenities    | Public access, urban. No facilities.   |

**Figure 7.17: Chindera Corowa Park**

The following excerpt from the local Daily News 4/09/1986:

Corowa Park Dedicated

Citizen remembered

Corowa Park in Cudgen Road, Chinderah, was officially unveiled on Saturday by New South Wales MLC, Keith Enderbury. The park was created by the Tweed Shire Council to honour the late Robert Corowa of Chinderah. Tweed Shire's deputy president, Cr. Tom Hogan, said the park was council's way of acknowledging a man who lived and worked for the good of people. Mr. Corowa, who was known to his friends as Zane, died of a heart attack in March at the age of 78. He was born in Cudgen in 1908 of New Hebridean parents. It was Robert Corowa with his wife Phyllis, who worked hard and successfully for official recognition of the thousands of South Sea Islanders (called the Kanakas) who had been indentured to work in Queensland sugar plantations in the late 1880's.

It is of interest that Mr. Corowa was remembered respectfully by the community including the local council for among other things, his hard work towards official recognition of the ASSI minority community. Sadly, Mr. Corowa did not live to see this take place, dying in 1986.



**Figure 7.18: Corowa Park dedication newspaper clipping (Tweed Regional Museum)**



## 7.6 Conclusion

Chapter 7 has demonstrated that for ASSI-related memory sites, each memorial object is comprised of a combination of characteristics, including experiences, values, and artistic design, that are influenced by the social milieu in which they were formed. The choices made in these areas arise from, and transfer, certain elements of moral and ethical orientations, which can be interpreted as gauges of contemporary societal attitudes. The examples in this chapter show that local community awareness does result in the creation of memorials, and that spontaneous community memory strategies can pre-empt or act as catalysts to promote eventual inclusion in the council controlled public memory sphere. Therefore, it is fair to surmise that behind the creation or inclusion of government approved and sponsored memory sites, there is likely to be original agitation from the community, such as in the example of the Buderim main street ASSI memorial plaque. Indeed, the first ASSI dedicated memorial in the assemblage, at Point Vernon, was created two decades prior to the remainder, and was instigated by an interested stakeholder group.

In this way, rather than fitting a universal typology, even as broad as the umbrella term of public art, each of the memory places has a separate local biography and set of interactions with both the pasts it represents and the presents with which it interacts. Extending this point, although each memory site is located in the overall public memory landscape, each also results in an interpretation which further removes it from a generic ASSI memory-scape,

as each is heavily content laden with philosophical constructs that are the result of localised identity values. Concurrently, however, taking a broader view of the memory sites in this chapter indicates an overall theme of the construction and portrayal of an ASSI identity. This emerges either by reinforcing a position of historical participation and dedication in the formation of local communities, or by challenging stereotypical images of Islanders as secondary citizens, such as by direct linkage to place, as in the naming of Corowa Park.

Following this line of thought, memory sites viewed through the Cartesian lens of symbolic representation, that is, the philosophy of the distinction between mind and body, can be construed to operate as non-human representations of symbolic human pasts. Further, considering memory sites in this way, extends a relationship between them, as societal symbols created to stand in for certain pasts, and the contemporary community attitudes that are in operation in their contemporary presents. In this way they can be understood to symbolise both versions of the past and versions of the present.

Memorials then, can be understood to make claims for certain physical and social interpretations and renditions of historical events as facets of their presents, which frees them from dedicated backward connections to events in the past. Towns' statue for example, thought of as a post-colonial response to prompt remembering of a local past, remains a static reminder of it.

However, as is currently playing out, considered from the position of the present, the visuality of the physical fabric, form and theme actually provide extra philosophical and social commentary that interacts with the present, and thereby influences future comprehensions of local identity. In this way, memory sites prompt people to think through their symmetrical relationships between past and present as cultural values are reified through their material formats. Intersecting and influencing contemporary local presents, memorials, even as they represent both versions of history, also reflect the social attitudes in which they were made. Even considered as public art, they impact historical memory and community identity through conceptual references, naturalistic imagery, and positioning in townscapes as objects with a background of multiple relations and a variety of influences.

Thinking of memorials from the contemporary perspective reinforces the importance of the past in local community identity building. This importance is represented by the addition of time capsules at two sites; Mackay and Mossman. As a memory strategy this proclaims communal intentions to project representative material culture of their presents into the future, even as they memorialise versions of their pasts that delineate their current identity construction.

The contemporary focus of this chapter has shown that memory sites operate in the present to open narratives and influence awareness of the role of the past in local constructions of identity. This present day focus will continue in



the following chapter, which will extend the concept of temporal interaction to examine the role and changing meaning of ASSI-related memory strategies in the social landscape. Considered as components in networks of relational meaning that interact with people as encrypted knowledge (Martin 2013:8), the next chapter will explore how local communities use memory sites to understand and relate to intangible pasts.

## CHAPTER 8: Networked Memory

**‘Each [memory] object therefore possesses traces that embody retentions from previous objects or protentions to a future object. Objects therefore exist as nodes in networks in which each object relates to others strung out through time and space. Such a condition exists because each object is the instansiation [sic] (or actualisation) of the social relations of either a single person or a group of people’ (Jones 2007:81).**

### 8.1 Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 determined that the assemblage memory sites transfer versions of psychological concepts (quadrant 1) of ASSI past experiences through the physiological phenomena of enactment (quadrant two), by holding these pasts in the physical format of material culture. In this way, embedded narratives and entangled placements reframe local histories, making these pasts visible in the public sphere. Chapter 7 then turned attention away from memory sites as versions of the past to consider how they interact with the contemporary philosophical viewpoints of their supporting communities (quadrant 3). This shows that the publicly accessible features of memorials, such as aesthetic presentation and form, speak to contemporary audiences on a level that provokes reaction and opens narratives, both of which influence the construction of local and national identity awareness. In this way, the past speaks through symbolic

representations, allowing social and ethical concepts to emerge into contemporary public discourse via the non-human agency of memorial material culture. Continuing to hold the focus in the present day, chapter 8 considers the human agency of interactions with ASSI-related memory sites through the social dynamics (quadrant 4) of networked memory practices. Social dynamics, for the purposes of this chapter, refer to the relationships between individual interactions and group level behaviours regarding organised community memory practices.

The focus of this chapter then, moves on from the nature (mind), culture (body) and symbolic representations (function) of ASSI-related memory sites to consider the dynamic relationships that are created by their overall interactive combination. This is not to assign a human-like agency to memory objects, rather to acknowledge the role they play as nodes in the networks of meaning of which they are components (Jones 2007:81). In networks ‘agency is distributed throughout the assemblage, which functions as a “federation” of actants, in which all material and non-material things are participants’ (Bennett and Harrison 2011:155). Memory sites as nodes then, can be thought of as points in a network at which correlations, such as spatial, material, social, cultural, environmental, and temporal aspects, intersect or branch.

Things [memory objects in this case] not only act as indexes of past events, and not only serve as prompts for the reiteration of past activities, they also act as nodes that both encapsulate and coordinate

activity. Artefacts thus more or less explicitly define and distribute roles to people and other artefacts. They serve to link together entities in networks (Jones 2007:90).

Indeed, these are reciprocal relationships, as Latour's 1999 philosophy asserts: networks are 'the series of local supports that are essential to the very existence of an object and help to make that object appear solid' (Martin 2013:8). The participation of ASSI-related memorials in networks of meaning, as objects with inherent representative knowledge from the past, that are also active components in the present and future due to their network relationships, reinforce the concepts of interaction and influence in ongoing societal thoughts and actions introduced in the previous chapter. Further, the ASSI memory sites, as an extended assemblage, also have relationships with each other, which 'are not necessarily directed towards the functioning of the whole, but which might indeed cause a network to stall or even cease functioning' (Harrison 2011:11). Thought of in this way, each memorial has multiple relationships in local networks of meaning as well as in extended networks of national and global connections.

Site specific interpretations therefore, can also become parts of greater social memory networks, influencing community relationships as interested stakeholder groups and councils organise the structure of urban designs and community art placements to include ASSI-related memorial sites. The considerable differences in all memory sites in the thesis assemblage, from a simple marker of a single event to involved multiple processes and stages

over prolonged periods, mark the complex nature of both creative impulses and the roles these sites play in localised and extended memory networks. Turning attention to some of the ways that ASSI-related memory sites participate as nodes in contemporary public lifestyles shows that, rather than static reminders of the past, they also have active roles in present day social dynamics.

## 8.2 Networks of Meaning

### 8.2.1 Mackay Lagoons Sector

An excellent example of an interactive memory site that holds multiple networks of meaning is the ASSI memory precinct at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, which is the location of the cane cutter memorial discussed in the previous chapter (figure 7.13). Purpose built at the Lagoons area of the gardens, the intention is to re-create a South Sea Islander Village, an idea based on an original suggestion put forward by an ASSI organisation in response to council's invitation for input into park development. As well as the cane cutter memorial, the sector also includes an ASSI Meeting Hut, which was built in 1993 with a building inspector from the islands to provide authenticity to the plans and to the construction of a traditional 'Long House'.



**Figure 8.1: Mackay Lagoons ASSI Meeting House, exterior-interior (Author's photos 8 May 2013)**

The roof and shutters were thatched by the local ASSI people with blady grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) gathered in the district, and ASSI caretakers

ensure continued Islander connection. The village is an historical tourist attraction dedicated in recognition of the contribution that ASSI people made to the sugar industry in the Mackay district (Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens 2016), and is concurrently used by the wider community for meetings and functions. Indeed, the hall is used regularly, as the photographs above support, in this instance being set up for a council festival of arts function. This ASSI memory location is particularly redolent of Islander connections in the past, as it has a strong history with both colonial sugar farming endeavours and post-colonial sugar development experimental farming:

Aware of the potential of the lagoons area for sugar production eight groups attempted to establish farmers mills in a little over a decade from the late 1860's. Of the sugar mills that were built between 1870 and 1889, several were short-lived and only one is still in production. A sugar refinery is a late addition... [Later] the lagoons was for over forty years, the site of an experimental farm and laboratory which became the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations (Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens 2016).

Indeed, the neighbouring fence line projects a view across cane fields to the working Mackay sugar mill.





***Figure 8.2: Mackay Sugar Mill, from the Mackay Lagoons Meeting House  
(Author's photo 8 May 2013)***

The Mackay ASSI precinct memory site is a work in progress, which features not only connections to past and present, but also to the future. Plans for future developments include: conversion of the meeting hut into a museum highlighting ASSI history in the region; a Kava House on the grassy slopes near the meeting hut; a stage and amphitheatre to hold events and cultural displays and provisions for more interpretative data on the history and heritage of the community for visitors (Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens 2016). In this way, as people continue to interact with organised or designated memory places, the sites can be seen as timeless places, where memory 'is not just the product of the weight of the past on the present but is

also the product of the curious and convoluted ways in which the future comes to bear upon a present' (Kohn 2013:23). Although this musing of Kohn's refers to life in general, it certainly applies to memory, and indeed the original indenture event for the purposes of understanding memory sites.

A further living and enduring memory strategy at the Mackay ASSI precinct is the unique feature of extensive plantings of coconut palms and fruit trees from the Pacific Islands. Here, attempts have been made to establish native gardens and traditional food species, as well as a memorial tree planting of community trees for each family within the Mackay Islander community. This again elevates the concept of memorial fabric and function from static representations of the past to living, useful and interactive components of present day communities. This integrates the memory of past people and events with connections to present people and place, as well to further human interactions with the memory tree grove in the future. Perhaps this memorial tree planting can be considered a living organic metaphor for an ASSI cultural heritage, bridging and linking the Islanders' traditional pasts to the Mackay present.

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Name              | <b>22. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER ORIGINAL FAMILY TREES PLANTINGS 'THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE'</b> |
| Location GPS data | -21 09.80 +149 09.28   |
| Street Address    | South Sea Islander Precinct, Regional Botanical Gardens, Nebo Road, Mackay 4740      |
| Date Recorded     | 08/05/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category    | Public park, urban   |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Form / style / fabric  | <p>Extensive planting of 33 coconut palms and fruit trees used in the Pacific Islands representing 'community trees for each family within the Island community' Supported by large metal embossed interpretive guide to locations and variety of tree, and South Sea Islander family represented, also metal engraved leaf-shaped plaque set into stone boulder base, both housed under Island stylised wooden roof structure</p> <p><a href="http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au/what_can_i_see/the_collections/south_sea_islander_precinct">http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au/what_can_i_see/the_collections/south_sea_islander_precinct</a></p>  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | ASSI group   |
| Dedication Date        | unveiled by Mayor Julie Boyd 1996  |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, local history, people, connection to place   |
| Inscription            | <p>THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE</p> <p>THE FIRST SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS ('KANAKAS') WERE "BLACKBIRDED" (IE. CRUELLY KIDNAPPED &amp; BROUGHT IN CHAINS), TO MACKAY, IN MAY, 1867. PASSAGEMASTERS THEN VENTURED THROUGHOUT THE MELANESIAN ISLANDS, ENTICING THOUSANDS MORE POTENTIAL PLANTATION LABOURERS TO THE WORK OF CLEARING THE LAND FOR THE BIRTHING OF QUEENSLANDS SUGAR INDUSTRY.</p> <p>AFTER THE FIRST FEW YEARS AN OFFICIAL RECRUITMENT POLICY SUPPOSEDLY REDUCED THE KIDNAPPING AND MANY RECRUITS CAME AS VOLUNTARY WORKERS.</p> <p>BETWEEN 1863 AND 1904, (WHEN RECRUITMENT OFFICIALLY CEASED). OVER 62,000 MELANESIANS, MOSTLY FROM NEW HEBRIDES, (VANUATU), &amp; THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, WERE BROUGHT TO QUEENSLAND.</p> <p>LOCALLY, THEIR PROUD LEGACY IS MACKAY'S SUGAR INDUSTRY.</p> <p>PACIFIC ISLANDERS WERE ALWAYS REGARDED AS A TEMPORARY LABOUR FORCE IN COLONIAL QUEENSLAND. THEY WERE GENERALLY SEGREGATED, RESTRICTED IN THEIR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND DENIED ALL BASIC CITIZENS' RIGHTS. MANY STAYED FOR THE THREE YEAR INDENTURED PERIOD ONLY, THEN RETURNED TO THEIR ISLAND HOMES. MANY SUCCUMBED TO DISEASE AND DIED. A SMALL NUMBER CHOSE TO STAY RAISING FAMILIES AND CREATING A NEW LIFE.</p> <p>DESPITE THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY, WHICH WAS EVOKED AT FEDERATION, A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF LONG TIME RESIDENT PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS WERE GRANTED CERTIFICATED OF EXEMPTION.</p> |

IN 1904, UNDER POLITICAL PRESSURE, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PASSED AMENDING LEGISLATION LIFTING SOME RESTRICTIONS. BY 1906, AT THE TIME OF OFFICIAL DEPORTATION, 1500 LEGAL MIGRANTS WERE GRANTED PERMISSION TO REMAIN IN AUSTRALIA, STILL UNDER STRICTLY LIMITED WORKING CONDITIONS. APPROXIMATELY 1000 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS SWELLED THIS NUMBER, THIS TINY POPULATION WAS JUST ABOUT ENOUGH FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS' CULTURAL IDENTITY. BETWEEN 15000 & 20000 DESCENDANTS OF THE ORIGINAL INDENTURED LABOURERS LIVE IN AUSTRALIA TODAY, SOME 85% IN QUEENSLAND.

ON 25TH AUGUST, 1994, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FINALLY RECOGNISED AUSTRALIAN-BORN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS AS A DISTINCT ETHNIC GROUP WITH ITS OWN HISTORY AND CULTURE.. THIS RECOGNITION SET A PRECEDENT IN OVERCOMING THE DISADVANTAGES AND DISCRIMINATION THE ISLANDERS HAVE EXPERIENCED FOR OVER 130 YEARS.

IN MAY OF 1996 THE DESCENDANTS OF SOME OF THESE ORIGINAL SOUTH SEA ISLAND LABOURERS IN MACKAY PLANTED TREES HERE IN MEMORY OF THEIR FORBEARS.

SEVEN TARO LEAF PLAQUES PLACED THROUGHOUT THE GROUNDS OF THE LAGOONS MEETING HOUSE CARRY THE ORIGINAL FAMILY NAMES AND IDENTIFY THEIR TREES.

ALL THE ARTWORKS AND SCULPTURAL SEATING IN THE GROUNDS WERE PRODUCED DURING THE "TREE-NAMING" COMMUNITY ARTS PROJECT, NOVEMBER, 1997 - FEBRUARY 1, 1998.

Notes/ Sources

Image



Heritage Status Listing no

Current condition Good, well maintained gardens and interpretive shelter

Access and amenities Transport necessary, wheelchair accessible, toilets nearby

**Figure 8.3: ASSI Original Family Trees Plantings 'The Forgotten People'**

Apart from integrating Islander heritage in a practical, user friendly way, the Mackay Botanic Gardens ASSI precinct goes some way towards demonstrating the interactive relationships that memorials can have in the long term process of place-making. Continuing to alter the surrounding environment in their role of memorial spaces in the landscape, they consequently impact the actions, attitudes and local dynamics of communities, influencing place names, folklore, urban organisation and the use of space.

## 8.3 Built Heritage

### 8.3.1 Religious Buildings

Expanding the focus from the purpose built memorial space to the larger landscape brings attention to ASSI-related memory sites that are in-situ at critical locations, either at or near an original place of significance. This in itself carries historical and social information commenting on these sites as meaningful locations in the past and by extension, in the present, due to their continued maintenance and connections as memory places. Three buildings emerge from the assemblage, all of which are listed on the Queensland Heritage Register and are religious places of worship particularly associated with the ASSI community. The Homebush Mission Hall (heritage listed 1997), the Rockhampton St Johns Church (heritage listed 2003) and the Bundaberg ASSI Church and Hall (heritage listed 2000), all continue to hold significant meaning to the ASSI people and their extended communities. This demonstrates that the placement of the religious buildings, in relation to general public urban organisation, choices of form and style, and the fact of their relationship to particular Islander usage, carries indicative meaning related to ASSI memory and heritage. The text inscribed on the extensive Childers memorial sculptures discussed in the previous chapter supports the significance of religion to the Islanders, opening with a reference to the Missionary John Thompson and his Islander assistants who had a significant influence on the Childers population (see figure 7.11 for full transcription).


These allegiances to religious beliefs on the accumulated ASSI material memory assemblage show a second Islander identity. In addition to that of connection to the historical Australian cane industry identified in chapter 7, there is also a significant and enduring connection to Christian religion. Indeed, the religious aspects of the early Islander working weeks may well have been the highlight of a life of otherwise hard labour, and a focus for hope as Mission schools provided both general and religious education. The Queensland Heritage Register notes that:

The everyday lives of these indentured labourers was controlled by Europeans, particularly in the area of education. South Sea Islanders mostly received their education through the Mission School System, developed by christian (sic) churches throughout the district. These mission schools, established away from the parent church, taught Christianity using full time missionary and Melanesian lay teachers. The school combined religious education with general education. Older people attended Sunday services, baptisms and other church services and were taught to read and write at night classes (QHR 2016: Homebush Mission Hall history).

Added to this, the church buildings acted as sanctioned meeting halls for local Islander communities as seen in the Homebush Mission Hall below:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Name              | <b>23. MACKAY HOMEBUSH MISSION HALL</b> |
| Location GPS data | -21 16.28 +149 03.78                    |
| Street Address    | Homebush Road, Homebush Mackay          |
| Date Recorded     | 14/04/2016                              |



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Place Category          | Church building, rural   |
| Form / style / fabric   | timber and corrugated iron   |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | Presbyterian Church later ASSI community   |
| Dedication Date         | original 28 June 1892 later 13 January 1992  |
| Theme(s)                | Religion, ASSI cultural heritage   |
| Inscription             | none   |
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>'The Mission Hall is strongly associated with the Islander community as a meeting place for religious, social, cultural, educational and community activities for over a century and particularly as a centre for protest meetings against deportation in the first decade of this century...The hall continues to be an important part of Islander community life and the recent major conservation works on the hall is evidence of the continuing significance of this building to the South Sea Islander community of the region' (QHR Significance criterion accessed 20/01/2016<a href="https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601705#">https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=601705#</a>)</p> |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes. QHR 601705 entered 6/01/1997 (QHR image)  |
| Current condition       | Well maintained  |
| Access and amenities    | Rural location. Transport necessary.   |

**Figure 8.4: Mackay Homebush Mission Hall**

This importance of this building to the local Islander community is evidenced

in its long usage and repair history. Established in 1892, it has been extensively restored several times, a wonderful example of the Theseus Paradox. Although historical in its current condition, it was rebuilt and repaired following severe cyclone damage in 1918 that nearly demolished it, and was again brought back from a point of dilapidation in more recent years by the Islander community prior to the 1990s. The Mission Hall is listed as a rare, uncommon or endangered aspect of Queensland's cultural heritage in that, '[a]lthough similar examples were once common throughout the region, it is now a rare example of community meeting place of simple vernacular construction methods using timber and corrugated iron' (QHR 2016). It is now under the trusteeship of the Australian South Sea Islander United Council, and many local Islander descendants hold strong connections to, affection for, and feel pride in the site.

Two hundred and seventy kilometres away in Rockhampton, St. John's Mission Church hails from a similar time frame, dedicated in 1896 (four years later than Homebush). It now has a similar position of importance to the local Islander community, but is also prone to the Theseus paradox in that it was rebuilt in its current form in 1912, replacing the small mission room that had previously stood on the site.

|                   |                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Name              | <b>25. ST. JOHN'S MISSION CHURCH</b> |
| Location GPS data | -23 21.30 +150 31.58                 |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Street Address   | 278 Ford Street, Rockhampton, QLD.   |
| Date Recorded  | 14/4/2016  |
| Place Category   | Church building  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Timber fibrous cement clad building, iron roof & heritage trees  |
| Designer/ Builder Name   | ASSI Community   |
| Dedication Date  | May 1896 (original building on site) October 1912 (current)  |
| Theme(s)   | Religion, ASSI cultural heritage   |
| Inscription  | St.John's Church of England  |
| Notes/ Sources   | <p>The church fits 5 criterions of heritage significance including its importance in demonstrating the evolution of Central Queensland's South Sea Islander community and a pattern of multicultural integration within the local district; its importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a European religious building type adapted within South Sea Islander culture; its aesthetic significance to its location; its strong and special association for the South Sea Islander community for social, cultural and spiritual reasons and its special association with the clergy, parish and Synod who supported the South Sea Islander community's opposition to the Commonwealth Acts of 1901 that sought to return South Sea Islander people to their islands of origin against their will (QHR 20/01/2016<br/> <a href="https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602342#">https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602342#</a>)</p> |
|  |  |
| Heritage Status Listing  | Yes QHR 602342 entered 5/08/2003 (QHR image)   |

|                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Current condition    | Well maintained |
| Access and amenities | Street access   |

**Figure 8.5: St. John's Mission Church**

St John's Church is still in use and remains a significant part of the local streetscape, as well as representing the physical, spiritual and material growth and development of the South Sea Islander community within Rockhampton. The place represents a link to the early Islanders who established a strong community both in the immediate neighbourhood and in nearby regions, all of whom shared a spiritual link with the Church (QHR 2016). Once again, tree plantings hold a particular memory significance with 'two distinctive pine trees planted on either side of the front entrance to the church; a poinciana tree; and a large silver wattle which is thought to be a remnant of the original plantings on the site (QHR 2016). In this way, for both religious building sites, and for the Mackay Botanic Gardens tree plantings, it is the associations with lived experiences, connected to the past but reclaimed post-indenture era, that resonate most strongly with Islander descendants as memory places of significance to their cultural heritage. This differs from the mostly European memory style of memorial making that results in material representations of versions of the past, which, regarding the ASSI-related memory assemblage, have tended to focus on connections to the early Australian sugar industry.

Yet another 250 kilometres south, the Bundaberg South Sea Islander church and hall complete a trio of religious buildings. The structures here differ from




the previous examples in that the Bundaberg church and hall were constructed at the later date of 1920, and are no longer in-situ. Built on the Fairymead sugar plantation for the use of the Islanders employed there, they were moved from the site in 1995 and are now relocated to the Islander section of the Bundaberg cemetery as the aerial view below shows.



**Figure 8.6: Bundaberg Cemetery (Google Earth image 8 August 2008)**

The move was 'in order that they may be closer to the graves of ancestral members of the South Sea Islander community, the South Sea Islander Church and Hall are significant for their continued association with ancestral worship' (QHR 2016).

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Name                    | <b>30. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER CHURCH AND HALL - BUNDABERG CEMETERY</b>   |
| Location GPS data       | -24 52.87 +152 19.29   |
| Street Address          | 46 Johnston Street, Bundaberg  |
| Date Recorded           | 23/10/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category          | Burial ground (Buildings relocated from Fairymead Sugar Plantation to Bundaberg Cemetery)  |
| Form / style / fabric   | Single storey timber buildings   |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | Constructed circa 1920 on the Fairymead Sugar Plantation replacing an earlier hall   |
| Dedication Date         | Relocated in 1995  |
| Theme(s)                | Religion, ASSI cultural heritage, community  |
| Inscription             | Bundaberg South Sea Islander Heritage and Community Complex plus ASSI heritage and site specific information on adjoining interpretive board.  |
| Notes/ Sources          | The complex includes replica Kanaka dry stone wall, memorial gardens, Kanaka Cemetery, and educational area. The South Sea Islander Church and Hall were built c1920 and relocated to a section of the Bundaberg Cemetery where many South Sea Islander people have been buried in 1995. 'A good, intact example of a simple missionary church and hall, the South Sea Islander Church and Hall are significant for their strong association with the South Sea Islander community and the exploitation of this large workforce employed in the Bundaberg district, one of the most affluent sugar districts in the state, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Importantly, the church and hall have a strong association for the present local South Sea Islander community and the experiences of their ancestors in Queensland.' <a href="https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602052">https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=602052</a> |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes. Queensland State Heritage Register, entered 28/07/2000<br>Place ID 602052<br><a href="https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=16788">https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=16788</a>  |
| Current condition       | Good condition, well maintained and evidence of community use.   |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Access and amenities | Transport necessary, wheelchair accessible in parts, toilets. |
|----------------------|---|

***Figure 8.7: South Sea Islander Church And Hall - Bundaberg Cemetery***

The buildings are still in use and sign-posted 'Bundaberg South Sea Islander Heritage and Community Complex'. Traditional Islander skills are taught and practised here such as the preparation of underground cooking ovens, and wood carving. Landscaped garden beds dedicated to various families provide the opportunity to understand the raw food ingredients that were grown and used by ancestors.



***Figure 8.8: Underground oven 'cuppa murri', Bundaberg (Author's photo 23 October 2013)***



***Figure 8.9: Wood carvings, Bundaberg (Author's photo, 23 October 2013)***





### 8.3.2 South Sea Islander Burial Grounds

For the materially underrepresented ASSI, 'identity in the cultural landscape also derives from the interaction of people with their environment resulting in distinctive patterns of settlement' (Lennon 2006:122). Chapter 4 demonstrated the settlement patterns that resulted from the placement of colonial sugar plantations, which of necessity arose in coastal areas with suitable environmental growing conditions. These are the same plantations to which Islander ancestors were transported, and established through their toil, and which now coincide with the locations of present day descendant groups (figure 4.2). The local stories of historical belonging to place and settlement patterns in contemporary Australian communities connect to this shared past, and the history of ASSI interments in Australian cultural landscapes are therefore also components of the broader (hi)story of Australian settlement.

The Islanders hold a particularly dynamic connection with their ancestors, as evidenced by the movement of the Bundaberg church and hall to the location of ancestral graves. This elevates such burial sites from mono-themed places of physical memory to interactive sites in the present which represent equally the past and its trajectory and participation in present circumstances. This speaks to Harrison's call for an archaeology which deals with surface assemblages in and of the present, in which he proposes 'moving away from an idea of the past and present as stratified, towards a notion of the past and present as a single surface' (Harrison 2011:155). For Harrison, '[i]n the same way that the past is immanent within the present on this surface plane, all of

the components of the assemblages at the surface are equally implicated in the production of the past and present' (Harrison 2011:155). Identified ASSI graves then, are time travellers of sorts, not only in a spiritual sense of ancestral connection for Islander descendants, but also as tangible junctions of Islander pasts, presents and futures. In this way, established ASSI graves can be understood as material culture 'which gathers, which brings together and which lasts: in other words, it relates qualities in time and space: the ideal node in a network' (Olsen 2003:98).

### 8.3.3 Sunnyside Sugar Plantation

ASSI graveyard 'nodes', as actants in memory networks, feature repeatedly in the thesis assemblage. Previously in this chapter the relevance of the ancestral Bundaberg graves was established as it prompted the moving of the church and hall (figure 8.7). Chapter 7 also identified the importance of ancestral grave sites citing the Polson Cemetery at Hervey Bay as the location of the first ASSI dedicated memorial sculpture (figure 7.14). The Sunnyside Sugar Plantation, also at Bundaberg, introduced in chapter 6 in relation to its extant example of dry stone walling, is also important for the heritage listed Islander graves that are on-site (figure 6.10). Due to rigorous efforts by the current owner, this is the first former plantation that was recognised and heritage listed (1996), not only for its previous working history and stone wall, but also as a site of 29 unmarked South Seal Islander burials, which was confirmed by archaeologists in 2012 using ground penetrating radar (Taylor 2013:1). The importance of this ancestral connection to the local community resulted in a dedication and commemoration service held the following year.



**Figure 8.12: Commemoration service honouring unmarked ASSI graves at Sunnyside Plantation, Bundaberg (Photograph from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-16/service-honours-heritage-listed-south-sea-islanders-gravesite/4891894> )**

The commemoration service attracted media coverage and was included as part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the arrival of the first South Sea Islanders to Queensland. ASSI community spokesman Matt Nagas commented that ‘It helps with the healing process, knowing we’ve put our ancestors to rest, [and he] believes it is only one of hundreds of [such burial] sites around Bundaberg [as they are] common - there are 15,000 buried throughout Queensland in unmarked graves’ (Taylor 2013:1).

### 8.3.4 Cudgen South Sea Islander Burial Ground

Four hundred kilometres south in Chinderah, another ASSI burial ground has managed to make its presence felt and is 'on the top ten list of haunted sites in Australia' (Gass 2015:1). This is the Cudgen Burial Ground where most of the first generation Islanders of the area were buried. However, this was on private land that was rezoned in 1968, and although Islanders protested the work, an access road was built over some of the burials (Register of the National Estate 1997). 'The headstones were hauled out of the ground with chains, many of the monuments being broken in the process. The stones were then transferred to the small patch of the nearby Chinderah Cemetery where they now stand and a memorial cairn was installed, which is discussed in chapter 4 (figure 4.6).

Although the actual graves were left unidentified (Gass 2015:1), ASSI descendants compiled lists of persons buried in the original Cudgen Burial Ground. The site was listed on the Register of the National Estate as an indicative place in 1997, and in 1999 an extensive memorial detailing local ASSI history was unveiled on-site (figure 8.13).

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Name              | <b>42. CUDGEN BURIAL GROUND ASSI MEMORIAL</b> |
| Location GPS data | -28 14.86 +153 33.27                          |
| Street Address    | Tweed Coast Road, Chinderah, NSW 2487         |
| Date Recorded     | 13/04/2016                                    |



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Place Category          | Burial ground, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric   | Five brass plaques set on tiled brick tri-panelled wall memorial  |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | ASSI descendant group and local council with Australian Heritage Commission, and input by Tweed Shire Council and the Ethnic Affairs Commission of NSW  |
| Dedication Date         | Registered on Register of the National Estate (indicative place), ID 19489, 24/06/1997. Actual Memorial dedicated 10/04/1999.   |
| Theme(s)                | ASSI cultural heritage, local history, graves marker  |
| Inscription (Proximity) | Cudgen Burial Ground<br>South Sea Islander Memorial   |
| Memorial Inscriptions   | This Memorial was erected on unmarked grave sites of South Sea Islanders by the National Federation of Australian South Sea Islanders Tweed Northern NSW Incorp.in 1998.  |
| Left panel - top        | <p>[Silhouette image of Islander Cane Cutter]</p> <p>This memorial commemorates the original Islander Pioneers of the Cudgen/Tweed districts who cleared land, cut timber and worked in the cane fields and farms of this area during the period 1867-1914.</p> <p>Followed by three entries of people involved in erecting this monument including ASSI descendants, Jack Woodwards Solicitor and Ethnic Affairs Commission NSW Tweed Shire Council's architect.</p> |
| Left panel - bottom     |  <p>Opened by<br/>Phyllis Corowa<br/>South Sea Islander<br/>10th April, 1999</p>  |



Middle panel - left

Map of Pacific Islands Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji in relation to Australia



Middle panel right

Map of Solomon Islands in relation to Australia.

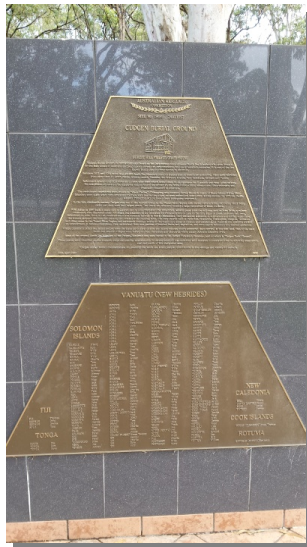
Right panel – top

Australian Heritage Commission

Site No 19489 24.6.1997

Cudgen Burial Ground [stylised image of Islander style grass house]

Hill Village Grass House



Cudgen Burial Ground is historically significant as the last resting place of many South Sea Islanders who were brought to the East Coast Forest of Australia as cheap labour during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is one of the few known burial sites of these people in Australia. Between 1863 and 1904 more than 62,000 South Sea Islanders came to Queensland as indentured labourers. They were recruited from more than 80 South Pacific Islands, mainly Vanuata, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Kiribati and Tuvalu.

Indentured labour contracts were for a three year term which bound them to an employer for 6 pounds a year - plus rations. On completion of contract the employer was to return the worker to his home island - many renegotiated their contracts and eventually remained in Australia.

The recruitment operations were known as "Black Birding". Kidnapping was common during the early years of these labour drives. Many islanders were taken when they attempted to trade with the visiting ships, or were enticed on board from fishing canoes. (In 1872, the Pacific Islander Protection Act outlawed these kidnapping practices).

In the late nineteenth century Cudgen was one of the busiest towns in the Tweed River region with timber cutters felling red cedar, black bean, cedar and teak from the Cudgen scrub. The South Sea Islanders formed a large proportion of these workers. W. W. Julius in 1887 built a sugar mill in Cudgen and in 1890 completed the first crush. Several years later the mill was sold to John Robb, a railway contractor, who employed some 300 South Sea Islanders to lay tramlines for the transportation of cane to the mill. Many of these Islanders had been indentured to John Robb in the construction of the Kuranda Railway in

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
|                      | <p>North Queensland. They worked as laboureres in cultivation and cutting sugar cane, the women stripped the cane for planting and worked with chipping hoes. The men cleared land at Duranbah, Bungalora, Tumbulgum, Eungella, Terranora and other areas in the Tweed River Region and undertook drainage works in the sugar cane areas of Cudgen and Chinderah. At Tomowin the Islanders worked banana plantations, they maintained their own gardens of tropical fruits and vegetables, and were expert fishermen and seafood gatherers.</p> <p>Village clusters of South Sea Island people were the mainstay of their culture and Island customs which supported their survival in this new land. Two of the main South Sea Islander villages were Forest Hill near Duranbah and Chinderah where mainly Solomon Islanders lived. Most of the original South Sea Islanders of the Cudgel-Chinderah area were buried in the former Chinderah Cemetery, part of which is 'Cudgen Burial Ground'. Their graves were identified on the roadside verge and nearby, approximately 30 metres south of this memorial; with hundreds of unmarked sites in adjoining areas north, west and south of this designated area.</p> <p>'Cudgen Burial Ground' commemorates for posterity the South Sea Island peoples' contribution to the Heritage and History of Australia.</p> <p>10th April 1999 JWW</p> |
| Right panel – bottom | <p>Lists names of SSI known to be interred hereabouts according to islands of origin; Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu(New Hebrides), New Caledonia, Cook Islands, Rotuma.</p>  |
| Notes/ Sources       | <p>Monument Australia <a href="http://www.monumentaustralia.org.au">www.monumentaustralia.org.au</a><br/> environment.gov.au<br/> <a href="http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/HeritageImage.aspx?ID=2520096#ad-image-0">http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/HeritageImage.aspx?ID=2520096#ad-image-0</a><br/> <a href="http://www.tweeddailynews.com.au/news/islanders-honour-150yrs/2019834/">http://www.tweeddailynews.com.au/news/islanders-honour-150yrs/2019834/</a><br/> <a href="http://www.northernstar.com.au/news/blackbirding-a-grave-concern-in-chinderah/1284416/">http://www.northernstar.com.au/news/blackbirding-a-grave-concern-in-chinderah/1284416/</a></p> <p>Inscription details and photograph from author's photo taken on 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.</p>  |

Image



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heritage Status Listing | Yes. Burial ground has status of registered on Register of the National Estate 24/06/1997 Place ID 19489. |
| Current condition       | Well maintained by Tweed Shire Council  |
| Access and amenities    | Street access. Private transport necessary.   |

**Figure 8.13: Cudgeon Burial Ground, Chindera**

This burial ground memory site is a place of interactive focus for the local community to remember, recognise and reconcile Islander heritage, acknowledged by Islander descendants and the local council.

Every year local South Sea Islanders celebrate their recognition by the Australian government with a flag raising ceremony. Recognition acknowledges the descendants of the first South Sea Islanders, and the injustices and discrimination the community has suffered for over a century. Our local South Sea Islanders are proud of their heritage and they continue to maintain their identity and links back to their island homelands' (Gary Bagnall - Tweed Shire 2015, *South Sea Islanders*, Facebook update, 22 August, viewed 14 October 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/garybagnalltweedshire/posts/1093280014033736> )

This burial site and its accompanying memorial present a particularly vibrant node, traversing all temporalities, with its extensive and instructive history of the Islander past, its attention from the council in the present, and the present and future interactions of community members on the annual flag raising ceremony at the recognition anniversaries. Perhaps for some Islander descendants in particular, the annual pilgrimage to this memory place may form a ritual of family, place and belonging.

### **8.3.5 Joskeleigh (Sandhills) Historical South Sea Islander Cemetery**

Identifying and interacting with the sites of ancestors' burial places is further supported in the similar story of the Sandhills Historical South Sea Islander Cemetery at Joskeleigh. Twenty-two men, women and children are buried at this site, associated primarily with the first generation of Australian Islanders, although 'oral history suggests that there are other unmarked graves outside the boundaries of the cemetery' (QHR 2016). Similarly to the Cudgen Burial Ground, this land was originally part of private land, until community lobbying encouraged the Queensland government to declare the burial ground a reserve for cemetery purposes in 1984 and in 1992 the site was heritage listed. Also similar is the restoration and identification of unmarked graves, where headstones were re-erected and a stone memorial with the names of those buried installed in 1991. A further point of interest is that, although both cemeteries are historical burial grounds, the community bonds that exist with these places and their associated heritage content, have resulted in people choosing to inter here in more recent years, with the last burial at Cudgen in 1960, and at Joskeleigh in 2001. This indicates that these grave yards are not merely memory places for backward glancing, but are indeed active nodes in networks of current meaning, with multiple relationships to time, place, cultures, identity formation, urban planning, maintenance and, in the case of this study, academic research.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>27. JOSKELEIGH (SANDHILLS) HISTORICAL SOUTH SEA ISLANDER CEMETERY</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -23 22.06 +150 46.74  |
| Street Address         | Joskeleigh Road, Joskeleigh, Queensland 4702  |
| Date Recorded          | 25/10/2013  |
| Place Category         | Burial Ground (approximately 22 interments)   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Headstones, grave surrounds/ railings, trees/plantings, metal memorial plaque on stone boulder.   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | 1880s - 1900s community cemetery. Wooden fence, grave markers re-erected and stone monument erected with plaque in 1991. Last burial in 2001.   |
| Dedication Date        | Declared a reserve for cemetery purposes in 1984. State heritage listed 21/10/1992.   |
| Theme(s)               | Graves marker, ASSI cultural heritage, local history  |
| Inscription            | <p>THE SANDHILLS<br/>SOUTH SEA ISLANDER<br/>HISTORICAL CEMETERY (on wooden sign)</p> <p>Memorial stone inscription reads:</p> <p>This Plaque has been dedicated to the memory of the twenty-two South Sea Islander men, women and children laid to rest here in their own special cemetery</p> <p>Mizpah Genesis 31-49</p> <p>The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another</p> <p>Tom Barcon was taken to Woorabinda<br/>Jimmy Haynes was found dead beside the railway line at Broadmeadows</p> <p>May we never forget their Labour</p>  |
| Notes/ Sources         | <p>MA Themed Culture, sub-themed Indigenous Photograph from Australian Cemeteries Index <a href="http://austcemindex.com/cemetery.php?id=558">http://austcemindex.com/cemetery.php?id=558</a></p> <p>The cemetery site comprised approximately a quarter of an acre and was originally part of a 100 acre freehold block. It is bounded on the north by Joskeleigh Road and to the south, west and east by freehold property on which is located mature vegetation, including mango and pine trees. All headstones within the cemetery face easterly. Glass ornamentation and shells surround most the graves. Shells were used quite often to decorate not only the graves, but also garden beds. Some graves are marked with timber crucifixes. There are a number of marble headstones, one of</p> |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Image                   | <p>which has a metal grave surround.<br/> A timber rotunda is located with the cemetery. The cemetery is surrounded by a timber fence with access via Joskeleigh Road <a href="https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600659">https://environment.ehp.qld.gov.au/heritage-register/detail/?id=600659</a></p>                         |
|                         |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | <p>Yes. Queensland State Heritage, entered 21/10/1992<br/> Place ID 600659<br/> <a href="https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=15434">https://heritage-register.ehp.qld.gov.au/placeDetail.html?siteId=15434</a><br/> Australian Heritage Places Inventory, Record Identifier 600659<br/> Previously on National Trust in 1981</p> |
| Current condition       | Well maintained by community  |
| Access and amenities    | Transport necessary, no road signage so difficult to locate (Various GPS data)  |

**Figure 8.14: Joskeleigh (Sandhills) Historical South Sea Islander Cemetery**

The location of the Joskeleigh historical South Sea Islander cemetery has a further significant connection to place for the ASSI. It is only 400 metres away from the only dedicated Islander museum collection in Australia.



## 8.4 A Tale Of Two Museums

### 8.4.1 Joskeleigh ASSI Museum

Housed in the old Joskeleigh school building, the collection at this museum spans Australian Islander history, with a particular focus on the school's operating years from 1910 - 2003. Included are black and white and colour photographs, slides, studio portraits, oral history tapes, and video tapes from local community members (Trove, National Library of Australia). The existence of the school, and its metamorphosis into the museum, resembles the Islander struggle for recognition, since both have only happened due to recurrent public pressure. The museum curator Doris Leo commented that 'it was quite a struggle to get this little school going, the Education Department was very reluctant to open [it]' (Mackay 2008:1).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>26. JOSKELEIGH SOUTH SEA ISLANDER MUSEUM</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -23 22.06 +150 46.98   |
| Street Address         | 356 Joskeleigh Road, Joskeleigh  |
| Date Recorded          | 25/10/2013 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Museum, rural  |
| Form / style / fabric  | ASSI collections; artefacts, photographs and documents in previous use schoolteacher's residence         |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Joskeleigh Community Association and the Joskeleigh South Sea Islander Community Development Association |
| Dedication Date        | Established in 2001  |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, local history, people  |
| Inscription            | Interpretive material freely available inside  |
| Notes/ Sources         | <a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/40817183">http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/40817183</a>          |

Image



|                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Heritage Status Listing | No                          |
| Current condition       | Well maintained and curated |
| Access and amenities    | Transport necessary         |

**Figure 8.15: Joskeleigh South Sea Islander Museum**

In the words of Andrew Thompson, expatriate Joskeleigh resident:

Though little more than a few scattered properties nowadays, the township of Joskeleigh has a rich and special place in the history of Central Queensland. First settled in the 1860's, the town would later become a haven and home for South Pacific Islanders who fell victim to the sugar slave-trade of the late nineteenth century (Thompson 2016).

The Joskeleigh population has diminished in recent years, but historical and heritage interest is vibrant and there are many interactions with both the location and the museum collection, as Leo reports:


People come back to ask about their ancestors, whether they went to school here or not and wanting to see photos, even coming in to have a look at the register to see if their parents' names are on here. So people are really interested in selling something like that. Many young people are unaware of their family history so that's why we really want to set up this museum so they can come in here and see this history preserved and so they can pass it on to their children because many of them just have no idea where they come from (Mackay 2008:1).

The museum's operation as a heritage centre is extended by a community-driven facebook page dedicated to the museum, peppered with photographs of community interactions and gatherings at the site. These include family reunions, recognition anniversary days, communal site maintenance days, night and historical walks, classic motor club visits, and retirement and seniors morning teas. It is evident, then, that this site plays a vibrant and interactive role in current local and extended community gatherings, as it is not only focused on memory of the past, but also on identity formation in the present. In this way, the Joskeleigh museum, as an on-site and Islander community driven memorial endeavour, is quite a contrast to the only other museum collection to include an ASSI component, the Australian Sugar Heritage Centre at Mourilyan (figures 8.16 and 8.17, and discussed briefly in chapter 5).

### 8.4.2 Australian Sugar Heritage Museum

Originally opened in 1977 as a tribute to the technological history of the Australian sugar industry, the private status of this museum and its accompanying twelve dollar entry fee does little to encourage repeated visits or interaction on any level other than as a passive viewer of traditional display formats.

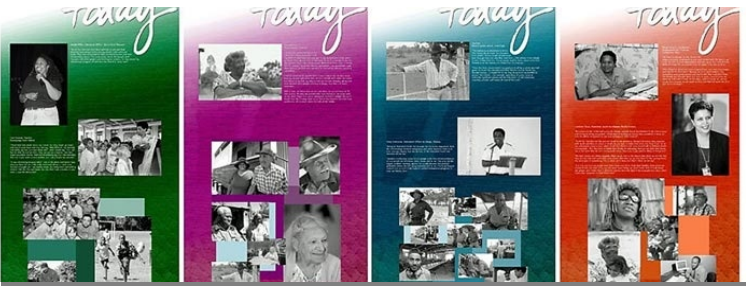
|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>10. AUSTRALIAN SUGAR HERITAGE CENTRE (MUSEUM) - MOURILYAN 'SOUTH SEAS ISLANDER LABOURERS (KANAKAS)' EXHIBIT</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | - 17 35.90 +146 02.48  |
| Street Address         | Bruce Highway, Mourilyan 4858  |
| Date Recorded          | 28/12/2012 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Museum, rural  |
| Form / style / fabric  | South Sea Islander collection includes historic photographs, posters, artefacts and barracks (accommodation) room interior.  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Previously known as the Australian Sugar Industry Museum (sugar farming and processing).   |
| Dedication Date        | Museum opened in opened in July 1977, expanded in 1988 with South Sea Islander exhibit added in 2004.  |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, industry  |
| Inscription            | Exhibit : 'South Seas Islander labourers (Kanakas)' Part of the <i>Refined White</i> exhibition is on display. Explains the history of indentured labour and the contribution that South Seas Islanders (Kanakas) to the development of the Sugar Industry in Australia. Explains the change to policies of the Federal Government which lead to the deportation of kanakas back to their island homes.<br><a href="http://www.sugarmuseum.com.au">http://www.sugarmuseum.com.au</a> |
| Notes/ Sources         | Museum website <a href="http://www.sugarmuseum.com.au">http://www.sugarmuseum.com.au</a>   |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Image                   |  |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Well maintained by volunteer staff and industry funding                           |
| Access and amenities    | Transport necessary. Cafe, toilets and wheelchair access                          |

**Figure 8.16: Australian Sugar Heritage Centre (Museum) - Mourilyan 'South Seas Islander Labourers (Kanakas)' Exhibit**

The South Sea Islander section of this museum space was added in 2004, almost thirty years later, primarily as a repository for materials associated with the touring exhibition 'Refined White – Centenary of Federation Project'. This project was designed as a travelling roadshow and mobile education package timed to coincide with the 10th anniversary of Islander recognition as a distinct ethnic group, and sponsored by local and national government and the Australian sugar industry.

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Name              | <b>43. REFINED WHITE EXHIBITION</b>   |
| Location GPS data | travelled from -17 34.90 +146 2.48  |
| Street Address    | The travelling exhibition route included Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Stanthorpe, Brisbane, Caloundra, Maclean and south to Sydney and Melbourne. Some permanently at Mourilyan Sugar Museum. |
| Date Recorded     | 28/12/2012 by JM  |
| Place Category    | Travelling Roadshow Exhibition. At each venue 20 photographs that are regionally relevant, are displayed.   |

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Form / style / fabric   | <i>Refined White</i> is a travelling exhibition of historic and contemporary photographs and personal mementos from the Australian Sugar Industry Museum, opened by Mal Meninga (ASSI descendant) which explores 140 years of South Sea Islander history. Opened on the 10th anniversary of ASSI recognition as a distinct ethnic group.   |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | The educational package was compiled by researcher and writer, Michael Berry, curated by John Waldron, with contemporary photographs taken by Brian Rogers. This project has been supported by the Queensland Government's Multicultural Affairs and Centenary of Federation; the Commonwealth's Centenary of Federation and Visions of Australia program; and the Australian sugar industry.  |
| Dedication Date         | Conceived in 1998, the collection was officially opened on the 10th anniversary of Australia's South Sea Islanders gaining official Federal Government recognition as a distinct ethnic group with its own history and culture, in the National Museum's Gallery of First Australians, on 18th March 2004 by Mal Meninga.  |
| Theme(s)                | ASSI cultural heritage, local history, anniversary   |
| Inscription             | Various, supporting images.  |
| Notes/ Sources          | National Museum Canberra, <a href="http://www.nma.gov.au/media/media_releases_by_year/2004/20040316">http://www.nma.gov.au/media/media_releases_by_year/2004/20040316</a> The project was supported by the Queensland Government's Multicultural Affairs and Centenary of Federation; the Commonwealth's Centenary of Federation and Visions of Australia program; and the Australian Sugar Industry <a href="http://brp.net.au/exhibitions/">http://brp.net.au/exhibitions/</a> 'A touring exhibition and secondary school resource which examines the struggle that governments and the sugar industry had in meeting the demands of the White Australia policy and its social impact on Australia's the South Sea Islander people. The project celebrated the culture and contribution of the Australian South Sea Islander people. Australian Sugar Industry Museum, This exhibition toured 12 national, state and regional venues in ACT, Queensland and NSW, 2001 - 2004' (c.moore@uq.edu.au 2013) |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | No   |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Current condition    | Well maintained at Mourilyan Sugar Heritage Centre and on-line articles available. |
| Access and amenities | Travelling exhibition now museum display with easy access.                         |

**Figure 8.17: Refined White Exhibition**

As a traveling exhibition and secondary school education package the materials and their heritage stories became dynamic, and interactive, bringing ASSI cultural heritage to life in community awareness. As static display boards in a pay-as-you-go and therefore somewhat elitist forum, whose primary focus is on the sugar industry, the story is effectively removed from general community interaction and removed once more to a location in the past.



**Figure 8.18: Display examples in the Australian Sugar Heritage Centre, Mourilyan (Author's photo 28 December 2012)**

Contrasting the two very separate styles of museum interactions, indicates a marked difference between Islander and European styles of memory



keeping. At Mourilyan, the European styled museum collection appears to connect the ASSI materials to meaning primarily through European values, that is, in this case, tied inexorably to the sugar industry. This repository acts as a remote receptacle for versions of the colonial historical past, accessible but ultimately removed from lived experiences in the present day. This situation seemingly speaks to Donald's (1991) concept of material culture as external symbolic storage systems for the structuring and organisation of biological memory. However, this model separates mind and body, human and object, so that material culture is viewed purely as an objective item, and not as arising from, and interacting with, multiple relationships to humans, place, time and fabric, as discussed in this thesis. Malafouris (2004) commented regarding Donald's model that '[m]aterially enacted memory is hardly a unitary phenomenon and as such, the adoption of ready-made psychological models and classifications derived from a paradigm that a priori treats material culture as external and epiphenomenal to the mnemonic system proper, will not help us go very far' (Malafouris 2004:56). Jones (2007) also is concerned that '[i]f we are to understand the relationship between memory and material culture it is critical that the body is included in our accounts and that we assume a level of interaction between embodied individuals and the material world. If we return to the notion of external symbolic storage, a number of problems remain' (Jones 2007:12). In effect, then, to consider ASSI museum collections or memorials, as memory somehow reified outside of human minds, exacerbates dialogues of Cartesian mind-body dualism.


The Joskeleigh museum on the other hand, although set up in museum format, displays a pattern of usage that is more similar to traditional Islander memory practices. These operate with the conception of personhood 'derived from a living memory rather than a history', which identifies present lives as continuations of ancestors' lives, '[t]hus the idea of a Cartesian space and a Cartesian past, present and future begins to break down' (Campbell 2006:114). This is evidenced at Joskeleigh in the interactive family-based activities that gravitate around the collection facility. Traditionally, Islander memories are 'preserved in oral tradition and genealogy, ... [and] such societies will build monuments with genealogical memorial practices in mind' (Campbell 2006:115). The Joskeleigh collection is a hybrid of sorts, a combining of two different memory keeping styles. It operates as a community memory focal point and contains accessible textual reference materials of European origin, but the real work of memory transmission is performed at the communal gatherings outside of the repository, where traditional Islander activities, such as food preparation, fishing, and oral history are communicated through extended familial units and interactions.

## 8.5 Memory Styles

For ASSI communities, connections to the historical sugar industry have become more removed from younger generations and the focus of ASSI memory is on places which resonate with lived experiences as direct connections to ancestors and therefore to the present day. In this way a 'post-indenture event' ASSI identity is claimed that enables the overlap of differing public memory styles and places in a cultural heritage that encompasses traditional Island heritage practices and Australian Islander experiences. Through community interaction 'materiality is not just material culture repackaged. Instead, it is about the interaction of humans and materials within a set of cultural relationships (Mills and Walker 2008). The Joskeleigh museum is elevated from a memory holding place through continued community interactions to become an active place of memory building in its own right. Akin to the traditional sand drawing techniques of the Pacific Islanders, the oral history style is continued by immersive and participatory interactive usage.

Reinforcing and demonstrating this point is the example of the South Sea Islander musical 'Behind the Cane - The Untold Story of South Sea Islanders in Australia' performed in Bowen in 2011. Perhaps another memory hybrid, this memory process was a case of European performance art meets Islander kinaesthetic memory transmission:

'Behind the Cane' was created with and performed by over 180 Bowen residents and told the story of the South Sea Islanders who were brought to Australia to work in the cane fields in the 19 century and the journey of their descendants through the succeeding generations, through racial discrimination and economic hardship, to the present day. The large-scale spectacle event was performed the Sound shell on the Bowen harbour foreshore to audiences of 8,000 over 3 performances and included many of the descendants in featured roles (Queensland University of Technology 2011).

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Name                   | <b>44. 'BEHIND THE CANE - THE UNTOLD STORY OF SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS IN AUSTRALIA' MUSICAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | performed at -20 1.05 +148 14.88   |
| Street Address         | Bowen Soundshell, Santa Barbara Parade, Bowen.   |
| Date Recorded          | 04/03/2014 by JM   |
| Place Category         | Community theatre production   |
| Form / style / fabric  | Musical theatre production created from oral histories and performed by a cast of over 100 descendants of SSI labourers.   |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Co-written by Margery and Michael Forde, music by David Bridie and Andree Greenwell, directed by Sean Mee, commissioned and presented by the Queensland Music Festival and the Whitsunday Regional Council with cast from Girudala Community Group, Bowen. |
| Dedication Date        | First performed 28th to 30th July 2011   |
| Theme(s)               | ASSI cultural heritage, people, community, identity, local history, public art   |
| Inscription            | Themes: Blackbirding, White Australia Policy, Australian South-Sea Islander history and culture  |
| Notes/ Sources         | Video of the musical was shown as part of the ASSI 150 Commemorations at the Queensland Museum, Brisbane on 11th and 23rd August 2013.   |
| Image                  |    |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Heritage Status Listing | No. Image above courtesy of Queensland Government, 'Arts for all Queenslanders' blog<br><a href="http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/blog/index.php/from-the-ground-up/">http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/blog/index.php/from-the-ground-up/</a> |
| Current condition       | Video available, on YouTube, as music and as script   |
| Access and amenities    | Original central venue with wheelchair access and toilets   |

**Figure 8.19: 'Behind The Cane - The Untold Story Of South Sea Islanders In Australia' Musical**

The enthusiastic creation and participation of such a large Islander cast demonstrates the relevance of this style of communication. Indeed, this musical was mentioned by the Bowen Information Centre in one response to the call for memory places as part of this thesis research (figure 8.20). A second example of performance-style memory presentation is the 'Romancing the Cane Festival' at Karnak Playhouse, Mossman. Although in this instance a component of a collection of exhibitions, installations, performances and public forums focused on the local sugar heritage, the inclusion of 'The South Sea Islander's integral contribution' is a form of enacted ASSI inclusion and memory.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>45. ROMANCING THE CANE FESTIVAL</b>  |
| Location GPS data      | -16 23.71 +145 20.21  |
| Street Address         | Karnak Playhouse  |
| Date Recorded          | 05/03/2016  |
| Place Category         | Performance Private Amphitheatre  |
| Form / style / fabric  | 3 day festival includes exhibitions, installations, performances and public forums. |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Diane Cilento   |
| Dedication Date        | September to October 2010   |
| Theme(s)               | Industry, community, local history, public art                                      |

## Inscription

## Notes/ Sources

The festival includes: 'Time walk from 1880 through to the present **The South Sea Islander's integral contribution honoured** Machinery through the ages Sound scapes of aural histories from the local cane community reaching as far back as Mossman's settlement Machinery relics given new life in sculpture ...[and community] forum ... chaired by the Douglas Shire Mayor Mike Berwick and attended by scientists, industrialists, cane growers, economists, futurists, politicians, the media and the community  
<http://www.karnakplayhouse.com.au/Romancing-The-Cane.25.0.html>

## Image



## Heritage Status Listing

No

## Current condition

Closed

## Access and amenities

Venue is in remote location with all facilities.

**Figure 8.20: Romancing The Cane Festival**

Notions of time are also impacted by this difference in memory styles, where the European style can perhaps be understood as following the inscribing principle, 'a specific European affinity for a monumental material culture inextricably linked with an emphasis on the linear concept of time, having a long historical trajectory' (Boric 2010:15). However, traditional indigenous Islander memory style, 'is in their relationships with the land, in the very business of dwelling, that their history unfolds. Both the land and the living beings who inhabit it are caught up in the same, ongoing historical process'

(Ingold 2000:139).

In this light then, public memory, as 'the concept used to explore the connection between social identity and historical memory, calls attention to the social contexts in which people shape their group identities and debate their conflicting perceptions of the past (French 1995: 9). For the contrasting ASSI museology memory styles, this invokes Nora's 'distinction between inscribed history and social memory' in that:

we require material things to perform the memory work that they do ... because of the conditions of social life within late-capitalism – material things were not called upon to do such work in the past. As Nora notes oral traditions facilitated his *milieux des memoires* rather than the materially sustained *lieux des memoires* of the present. Materiality was configured and worked differently in our recent past as in other ethnographic contexts and as surely as it was in the more remote past of traditional archaeology. Different technologies with different materialities have been in effect in the past, and the recent past as well as they are emerging into effect in the present (Buchli 2010: 207-208).

The identified European inscribed historical memory style and the Islander enacted social memory style are different mechanisms for memory transferral. Regarding ASSI memory sites, whereas the first style concentrates on historically documented pasts, an Islander identity aligned with the Australian colonial sugar industry history is created which has the effect of retaining the focus on a background of disempowerment and unrewarded labour, even as that past is disconnected from the present, held



in stasis within artificial holding structures. The second style fluidly connects the past to the present, claiming a post-indenture identity via lived experiences and empowerment through personal endeavours and endurance. Importantly, this style of memory transmission, focused on actual places and people, has the effect of aligning time frames into a continuing experience, rather than segmenting certain versions for remote viewing.

These observations sit well in the quadrant four focus on social dynamics and inter-objectivity; in other words, ‘the understandings that are shared within and between cultures about social reality’ (Sammut & Moghaddam 2014:991). Memory objects in this light are ‘objectifications of the social world held by a cultural collective, [which compose] a socially constructed reality for that cultural group ...that serves to orientate routine interaction accordingly ... [and] can span across diverse cultural universes, encompassing different object relations for different social groups’ (Sammut & Moghaddam 2014:991).

However, regarding ASSI-related sites, these two conflicting memory styles are further compromised by :

a tension [that] is created in the way archaeological and conservation process privileges the material aspects of the past and reinforces a perception of the invisibility of the pasts of indigenous and other marginalised groups and perpetuates their absence from the representational and symbolic spaces of the city (Ireland 2015:105).

Islander instigated memory practices, such as the community focus at Joskeleigh museum, the performance presentation of the Bowen musical, and other commemorative activities at memory sites, are beginning to address the memory style divide, bringing extended public attention to, and the invitation to participate in, an encompassing Australian Islander inclusive cultural heritage. The memory sites, then, do indeed have agency through their roles as nodes in relationships of meaning, lending support to Latour's 1996 claim that 'social interaction can be framed and structured through the use of objects ... due to the fact that action is relegated to objects in the environment in which they exist ... [thus] co-exist[ing] as in a collective of humans and non-humans' (Sammut & Moghaddam 2014:991).

The perspective of ASSI-related memory sites as nodes in networks of meaning is extrapolated in the following integral diagram, (Figure 8.21). This follows on from those created in the earlier stages of the thesis to design the research premise and context. The previous integral diagrams looked firstly, at the historical aspects surrounding the indenture event for contextual information regarding intentional, behavioural, colonial theoretical and environmental factors (figure 3.3). This provided the space in which to consider the past event from multiple perspectives to inform the thesis premise. A second integral framework (figure 3.4) identified historical (emergence), artefactual (function), theoretical (meaning) and social memory practices (role), that extended the research focus to include current perspectives determined from the literatures. The third and final diagram now

considers the cognitive aspects identified by the thesis research that infer agential qualities about memory sites. These cover representational pasts, entangled cultural heritage, ethical concepts, and memory practices.

| Quadrant 1<br>'I'  | Quadrant 2<br>'IT'  |
|--|---|
| <b>SIGNIFIED HUMAN PAST</b><br><br>Embedded historical memory<br>Conscious transfer<br>Colonial themes<br>Universal stereotypes        | <b>NON-HUMAN SIGNIFIERS</b><br><br>Entangled archaeological memory<br>Subliminal cognitive content<br>Post-colonial historical awareness<br>Localised relevance |
| Quadrant 3<br>'WE'   | Quadrant 4<br>'ITS'   |
| <b>SYMBOLISED ETHICAL CONCEPTS</b><br><br>Community perspectives<br>Moral reparation efforts<br>Validated past<br>Reflect / introspect | <b>SOCIAL MEMORY NETWORKS</b><br><br>Cultural values<br>Social practices<br>Reconciled past<br>Participate / interact   |

**Figure 8.21: Integral grouping of ASSI-related memory sites as nodes in networked relationships**

ASSI-related memory sites as nodes in networks, then, make sense of the competing versions and representative styles of ASSI pasts by uniting the disparate threads of meaning through their centrality. Identified in this way, as actants in operating and on-going networks, rather than as end results of past events, their ability to have different meanings in different social and

temporal relationships is also explained. Further, memory sites in the centre of the integral diagram places them in common position between the left quadrants 1 and 3, where the focus is on mental aspects and the right quadrants 2 and 4, which focused on the enacted, material aspects of memory, ultimately easing perceptions of inherent Cartesian mind/body dualism tension.

## 8.6 Conclusion

Chapter 8 has recognised various relationships and human interactions with memory sites, completing the thesis focus on the assemblage through each of the four quadrants. Whereas chapter 5, which looked at the first quadrant's psychological aspects, considered memory sites as places that transfer versions of the past, arising from mind or nature, chapter 6 determined that these versions were enacted via second quadrant behavioural characteristics where material culture anchored them to place, aligning with concepts of body or culture. Chapter 7, exploring memory sites from the perspective of the philosophical constructs in quadrant 3 recognised the non-human agency of memory objects, determining them to engage a functional provocation of discourse and awareness, catalysed through contemporary symbolic representations of the ASSI story. Finally, chapter 8 considered the assemblage from the fourth quadrant's focus on social dynamics, uncovering the vibrant mnemonic social dynamics and networked memory practices of human interactions that aid the memory transmission process. This uncovered a past interacting with the present, in networks of meaning that go some way towards reifying an intangible ASSI past and provoking human interactions with time, place and identity creations.

Considering the very presence of ASSI memory places implicates them as actants in a memory assemblage network, and extends to include their whole evolution from the ASSI event and its consequent memorials to our current and future interactions with the cultural landscape and Australian historical

narrative. Thinking of memorials in this way, with relational trajectories as nodes in networked relationships with time, links them to the pasts they represent, but also to new relationships with places and objects in an evolving present. In this way memory places can be construed as time travellers that connect with the ASSI event, while concurrently being able to take on different relational meanings as people and landscapes continue to change and progress. Rather than merely representing colonial era industrialisation and expansion events, they can be seen to actively participate in the social development strategies of the post-colonial present through the relationships they have with place, fabric, form, time and people. Potentially relieving the tension between the past and present towards a recovered future, the role of ASSI-related memory sites extends from static representatives of isolated moments in history to a position of ASSI heritage structures in the present, promoting a tangible focus on an otherwise intangible past in an evolving temporal and spatial landscape.

## CHAPTER 9: Thesis Conclusion

**'For if knowledge is not received from predecessors in advance of its application in the world, then objects of memory cannot pre-exist acts of remembering. Nor can such acts be understood as purely cognitive operations, of calling up representations already installed within the mind. On the contrary, it is through the activity of remembering that memories are forged. This activity, moreover, is tantamount to the movement of the person through the world. Memories, then, are generated along the paths of movement that each person lays down in the course of his or her life' (Ingold 1993:148).**

### 9.1 Introduction

As the culmination of the research, this chapter begins with a brief recap of the overall research, followed by discussion addressing the thesis questions and suggestions for future related study. From the conundrum of representative omission in the national narrative for the minority ASSI community, this research has taken a material culture focus on the mechanics of public memory to link the present day to an invisible past. The application of archaeological thinking has, even in the paucity of directly attributable Islander artefacts, afforded an entry point to the contemporary problem of post-colonial inequality, contributing towards understanding the relationships between people and objects in regards to memory strategies, and the production of meaning. The existing literature was discovered to compound the situation of Islander representation with Eurocentric



historiography reflecting the forgotten and overwritten state of Islander participation in the Australian story. Oral histories, on the other hand, were found to counter this position, with accounts of contentious background colonial histories connected in most part to the sugar industry.

From this background, two issues compounding an operative ASSI cultural heritage were identified that centre around materiality and the creation of ASSI memory. These align with the ancient heritage paradoxes of the song of Homer, which questions the veracity of consequent versions of a story, and the ship of Theseus, which asks whether a physically altered object remains fundamentally the same. This led to the thesis contention that an assemblage of existing ASSI-related public memory sites, along with their individual biographies, provides archaeological ingress to understand and address the conflicting components of historical memory and cultural representation issues. This entry point provides data regarding the articulation of competing narrative songs, as well as associated material expressions and representations. Realising the complexity of the entangled ASSI memory situation, a quadrant framework was designed to define and organise the conceptual aspects surrounding the creation and interpretation of the research assemblage. This framework grouped the perspectives into the aspect foci of embedded historical memory, entangled formation processes, theoretical valuations and agency in social memory networks. Analysis of data according to these four quadrants defined the arrangement of the thesis discussion chapters.

From this analysis the values of inherent verbal and non-verbal messages of the assemblage were explored through linguistic and material placements. This determined that selectively constructed versions of the ASSI past are signified via conscious and subliminal behavioural methods which together transfer and anchor meaning from the past into present(s). However, it was further established that, although the materiality of memory sites may appear permanent and impervious to time as intermediaries between past and present, attached versions of the past are not static, but can be interpreted with meanings distinct to individual viewers. These individual memory positions further influence and interact with public awareness and memory of the ASSI in multiple ways. The memory sites, viewed from a focus on the first two quadrant perspectives of embedded mental and entangled behavioural phenomena, can be construed as supporting realist (natural) and idealist (cultural) philosophies of knowledge (Martin 2013:5), which therefore leaves an ontological gap between mind and material culture.

The focus on conceptual references in chapter 7 went some way towards bridging the dichotomy between humans and things, signified and signifier. This demonstrates that rather than fitting a universal typology, each memory site arises from and continues to interact within local communities in contemporary networks of relational meaning. While this recognition of continuing relationships effectively freed the conception of memory sites from being dedicated one way connections to the past, it also highlighted the non-

human agency of the sites themselves, enabling new information and relationships from the physical world to be incorporated and subsequently influence communities, directing awareness of the role of the past in local identity constructions and influencing future comprehensions of ASSI cultural heritage. In this way, the ASSI-related memory sites were demonstrated to operate in the present, opening narratives, challenging persistent Islander stereotypes, and reinforcing ASSI identity construction. This supports the contention that materials, humans or narratives do not create the phenomena of memory, either separately or together, but rather it is the networks of relationships between all of these components, including the memory sites themselves, that create things (nature), society (culture) and discourse (Latour 1999:145; Martin 2013:36).

The final focus was on the memory places as operatives within such systems. This identified memory sites as nodes, points in networks at which trajectories of people, things and discourse, as well as past, present and future intersect. As active components of socially dynamic systems of networked memory then, the ASSI-related memory sites operate within an overall interactive combination of agency distributed throughout all points in the networks. This dictates that ASSI-related sites of memory, despite *and* due to, links with past events, actively participate in post-colonial social and cultural developments, including continuing place-making processes, identity constructions and cultural heritage management. In this way, as well as reifying invisible pasts they are versatile and adaptable to changing

contemporary requirements, as evidenced by the recognition of the contrasting and evolving overlapping memory styles of European inscribed historical memory and Islander enacted social memory practices at sites. In this way ASSI-related memory sites have multiple roles and relationships, in effect creating for them secret lives, since to consider sites from a single perspective is to leave hidden other interacting components of their position in webs of meaning.

This research has indicated that, although previous studies centred on material, social, historical, or cultural processes, had uncovered various relevant facets of memory sites, it is only through the combination of these approaches that recognition of memorial agency, as multi-faceted nodes within matrices of meaning is established. The remainder of this discussion addresses the thesis questions and elucidates the contribution of this research towards understanding the complexities of human memory strategies in the post colonial arena of conflicting historical narratives.

## **9.2 ASSI-Related Memory Sites As Materialised Memory**

The thesis focus on questions of representation in the public sphere regarding ASSI cultural heritage, has uncovered relationships between the versions of the past portrayed at memory sites and the input this has on present day local communities and identity constructions. Although there are myriad relationships between memory, people, place, time and fabric, the thesis focus on broader, accessible memory of the Islander indentured labour event considered only those places that were publicly accessible, socially constructed areas. As locally identified places of and for memory then, individual, collective and social memories, as defined and discussed in chapter 1, can all operate within the broader framework of public memory (Casey 2004:25-26). This is significant because it is within the particular domain of public memory, enacted in publicly accessible places that people 'recall, recognise and localize their memories' (Halbwachs 1992:38).

The research determined that ASSI-related memory sites have been created either with the intention of leaving a reminder of what has passed, or of communicating meaning and making sense of the environment and experiences to people present in the time of their construction, both of which extend to those who interact with them in the future. It can be argued, therefore, that memorials enable people's short term memories, which necessarily have limited capacity and duration, to be transferred to long term memory structures, to allow individual versions of the ASSI event and its

repercussions to become available to public ownership, and thereby to foster communal associations to constructions of identity and place. As temporal and spatial territory markers the memorials can also be construed as attempts to transcend time, attaching an ownership to place or cultural value systems, and including or excluding via elitist or political authority, as well as representing a particular group stance. However, the research discovered that the meanings attached are far from static, as ASSI-related memory places, on both personal and societal levels, may represent concurrently loss, achievement, authority, ownership or experience, involve issues of identity, belonging, contemporary societal values, or any combination of these. This is further complicated because interaction is necessarily individualised by personal experiences and therefore may have quite different meanings for separate consumers. Despite these complexities, the further extension of archaeological interpretation to ASSI-related memory sites uncovered hidden components of ASSI intangible cultural heritage that speak to the thesis questions.

### **9.3 Public Memory Of The Colonial ASSI Past**

Working from the contemporary present day, the initial thesis foci considered the verbal and non-verbal methods of memory transfer available through the material and conceptual properties of memory objects. This determined that the physicality of memory sites actively participates in interactions of meaning between people and materials to transfer versions of colonial histories and by extension to influence comprehensions about local identity. The focus on the verbal, language based characteristics embedded in, or attached to memorials showed a continuation of historiographical dichotomies in that the ASSI past is presented using either key emotive language and images to communicate on conscious levels, or else the contestation is ignored, both of which create idealised histories that are negative and positive.

The public location, accessibility and abbreviated format of memorials, however, means that intentional portrayals of the ASSI story and people through the visual cues of linguistic and imagery choices in texts and graphic representations, reach and articulate with public memory at more personal and local levels than historiographical narratives alone, through their presence in people's everyday lives and landscapes. Due to this continual reinforcement of versions of intangible pasts, meanings created through semiotic communication in the form of material reminders and metaphors for the experience of memory, result in the memorial sites themselves taking a role in contemporary public memory. ASSI memory places then, have the



effect of (re)framing local histories, which can also make underlying historically based tensions visible and create or dissipate cognitive dissonance as historical representations compete with or complement each other. As well as affecting local identity constructions, the dichotomy of contradictory versions of historical pasts also extends to general cultural portrayals with the predominant Islander portrayal observed in Australian memorials being one of strong, *powerful* workers who cleared the land and established the cane fields with their bare hands. This is countered by the second theme of a people who are *powerless* to have any control of their lives in the hegemonic colonial industry. The transfer of such representative versions of the past can obfuscate historical and cultural heritage narratives and affect the way people remember, think and talk about the ASSI event.

Supporting these verbal representations of Islander pasts in the material format of memorials, is the non-verbal information enacted through fabric and placement choices that anchor these intangible pasts in tangible forms and to various presents. The research determined that ASSI-related memory places hold many entangled formation connections due to variations in creative motivations, view points, access to technology and materials, and funding support levels. Further, the cognitive content was seen to operate through a combination of conscious and subliminal means, involving locational placements, construction fabric and emotive word choices. Therefore, public memory of the ASSI past determined through memory places is not a verifiable quantity, but a collection of diverse views and versions, that can

hold multiple perspectives across the assemblage as well as within a single site. Thinking of memory sites in this way, as semiotic representations for historical memory, indicates that 'representation is more than conventional, linguistic and symbolic ... [and] goes beyond language' (Kohn 2013:9).

As with the verbal representations, a major theme identified in the cognitive messages of non-verbal placement and formation choices is one of entanglement with other memory claims. Arising from Islander and European shared colonial industrial and settlement histories, this situation has created issues surrounding the articulation of an ASSI identity through memorials. These entanglement issues appeared in diverse ways, including placement hierarchies in public spaces, memory by inference or connotation, subsumption by the sugar industry, over-building of historic Islander built transport networks and the reuse of other infrastructure such as embarkation wharves or stone walls that have been lost in settlement narratives. Despite such entanglements with the colonial sugar industry however, there was no evidence of Islanders linking their histories with the predominant type of sugar infrastructure: mill sites. Indeed, sugar mills were generally not associated with memory of the ASSI except on the behalf of non-Islander heritage professionals who suggested mills as sites for future material heritage studies (Hayes 2002:77-78; QHR Oaklands Sugar Mill Remnants ID 645607).

The major non-verbal connection to the sugar industry echoed that of verbal

constructions, via representations of cane cutter imagery, materially reinforcing an ASSI identity of industrial labour commodity, and promoting male gender values. This has the additional effect of distancing the Islanders as functioning humans, excluding women and children, and dispossessing Islanders of either personal agency or general cultural values. This particular identity portrayal was further supported by the citations in archaeological significance assessments of heritage listed memory sites. In these, Islander connections were often flagged only as 'potential', and were assessed as such because of their participation as labourers in the construction of colonial sugar infrastructure. In general, these listed sites were relict on the landscape, composed of trails, drains and buildings, and not sign-posted or interpreted at the sites, suggesting that the archaeological focus on material artefacts and infrastructure has unwittingly supported the sugar industry subsumption of Islander representation.

Retaining a focus on the embedded and entangled elements of the material culture of ASSI memorials presents a view of memory places as signifiers or symbols of the past, abstract cultural objects and symbols of colonial and post-colonial themes such as settlement, industrial history and multiculturalism. This focus has the effect of keeping the Islanders in the past, connected to colonial stories of disempowerment. Although the research recognised versions of the contested ASSI colonial past to have been represented through various conscious and subliminal methods which varied according to socio-cultural refinements, generally, the materials based

focus of memory places as representatives, or receptacles of versions of the past, removed connections to current place and belonging. Conversely, the figurative language and naturalistic cane-cutter imagery did have the effect of foregrounding ASSI in the Eurocentric histories of colonial settlement and industry, thus having the potential to disrupt certain conventional ideas of national and local identity, and raise awareness of confrontational histories.

Further, ASSI (hi)stories represented in Australian memorials through artistic representations sometimes obviated the need for prolonged verbal instructions and were seen to introduce a humanising quality to the indenture story that was capable of shifting the focus from Islanders as a labour commodity to one of them as real people who participated in local communities. In this way, aesthetic presentations brought a commonality across cultures, times and experiences, contrasting essential dualisms such as the human - non-human divide and the past-present separation. The research concluded, therefore, that the cognitive values of verbalised and non-verbalised material culture of memory places are crucial to building an ASSI identity that narratives alone cannot provide.

For remembering the ASSI then, the interpretive results identified general memory themes and structures, but no universal typology, as each site has separate local biographies and interactions with the particular local pasts they represent, as well as the presents in which they interact. Indeed, local community awareness was identified by this research as instrumental in the

creation or designation of many ASSI-related memory places, erupting as spontaneous community memory strategies which pre-empted or acted as catalysts that promoted the eventual inclusion of the monument in the council controlled public memory sphere. This is supported by the agitation from a stakeholder group to create the earliest dedicated ASSI memorial and the path by which the agitation for the construction of this memorial from the extended populace enabled it to precede other government approved and sponsored memory sites. Even when ASSI content was subsumed by other histories, interest and recognition was retained in local communities when physical evidence remained. This shows that, although each memory site is located in the overall public memory landscape, each was also determined to be heavily content laden with philosophical constructs which are the result of localised identity values. These values further remove them from a generic ASSI memory-scape.

## **9.4 Remembering The ASSI In The Present**

The role of material culture in representing identity and culture is not restricted to versions of the past, but was also shown to have relationships with present day social constructions and post-colonial multicultural efforts. Indeed, moral and ethical orientations identified by the research include themes of reparation, reconciliation and validation of Islander participation in Australian histories, indicating an emergence of Islander representation in contemporary societal attitudes. In this way, the memory sites reflect and catalyse the opening and dissemination of ASSI-related awareness and narratives, showing an additional facet of memorial material culture that extends beyond their representative role as signifiers of the past.

Recognising differing degrees of naturalism, abstraction and aestheticism in the forms of accuracy of details, conceptual references and artistic licence, the research interpreted memory sites to have agential relevance, promulgating abstract concepts that interact with people in the present. This interaction however, takes many relational forms as the intention and reception of a memorial's message continues to be interpreted through personalised perspectives that reflect and complicate efforts to move forward from the contentious issues surrounding the Islander past. The Robert Towns statue illustrates the situation most distinctly, where its intention to commemorate ownership claims through colonial European machinations, instead prompted local mobilisation of opposition, resulting in the public

acknowledgement of unresolved historical issues. This indicates that the present emulates the past in contemporary conceptual divides surrounding the ASSI past, with memory sites playing an active role in bringing these bubbling issues to public attention, to the point of contesting established historical narratives. In this way, where the past can be considered to construct the present in regards to local historical alignments of place and social structures, the present can also determine understandings of the past as communities evolve and cultural awareness develops. This proves that public memory is flexible and able to incorporate alternative histories, that absence in the memorial narratives creates meaning as much as presence does, and that memory sites reflect the specific social context in which they are created.

It follows then, that this research of ASSI-related memory places supports the view that colonial 'representation which has been used to understand, control, or predict the world ... no longer works effectively ... due to too many anomalies that cannot be explained away, [resulting in new representations and] adaptations of old forms' (Martin 2013:115). In this way, memorials can be dynamic contemporary proponents of new post-colonial developments on old hegemonic colonial attitudes, pointing towards a 'story of imagined future community' (Shanks 2007:592), as opposed to the idealised histories identified previously. Indeed, the sites that did tackle the ASSI contention through on-site texts tended to blend opposing dialogues, as opposed to taking one view over another. This resulted in crediting Europeans for their



entrepreneurial skills in establishing the sugar industry, and Islanders for their participatory hard labour. Perhaps this represents a step forward in recognition, but resolution of a mutually acceptable memory stance that includes the following 150 year trajectory remains elusive, indicating that post-colonial trajectories are in motion, but are always works in progress. In addition, the research clearly supports the thesis premise that memorials are accurate entry points and indicators of contemporary public states of awareness.

Although overall memory transmission centres around issues of ASSI identity, a focus on the present day recognised two themes that form the basis of narratives based on colonial pasts. These are the reinforcement of Islander participation in local community formations, and challenges to the stereotypical images of Islanders as secondary citizens. In this way, Cartesian distinctions between mind and body, which consider memorials as objective non-human representatives standing in for human pasts, can instead become interpretations of symbolic versions of past *and* present day societal orientations, that have subjective relationships with contemporary community members. The relationships between ASSI-related memory sites and contemporary debates about Islander identity and cultural heritage therefore have the ability not only to support claims for certain physical and social interpretations and renditions of historical events, but also to intersect and influence social dynamics in the present day. By impacting historical memory and influencing comprehensions of local identities through

positioning in townscapes, naturalistic imagery, conceptual references, and philosophical social commentaries, memorials are freed from being static representatives of the past and transformed into active participants in the present.

## 9.5 Memory Strategies

The evidence presented in this thesis, showed that each memorial in the assemblage had multiple relationships within local networks of meaning as well as within extended networks of national connection. The diverse functions of ASSI-related memory sites within evolving networks gives support to other academic findings that ‘functionality is not just an infrastructural “given” which is subsumed by social and cultural values. Rather, they demonstrate that functionality is itself an integral of social process’ (Graves-Brown 2000:5). Indeed, rather than ‘having an objective existence that is independent of our perceptions (Sammut and Moghaddam 2014:991), memorials have a role in the social interactions of people. The ASSI memory sites were shown to be points, or nodes in networks, at which correlations, whether spatial, material, social, cultural, environmental or temporal, intersect and branch. As spaces of interactive focus for communities to remember, recognise and reconcile Islander heritage, they were also seen to impact the long term process of place-making by influencing naming, folklore, urban organisation and use of space, altering the surrounding environment and consequently impacting the actions, attitudes and local dynamics of communities.

Through the assemblage the research uncovered contrasts between the ways in which people interact with memory sites and, by extension, the strategies used by people to remember through the material culture focus of memory sites. Although there are similarities and differences in the ways that

individuals and local groups engage with place and memory that are common to all humans, the assemblage indicated that, in terms of ASSI memory sites, two obvious memory strategies emerged which align with both Western and Islander memory practices. The European inscribing principle was observed to link with the linear concept of time and tended to encourage the view of the materiality of the sites as memory, somehow reified outside of human minds. This served to exacerbate Cartesian dialogues and influence the way that the sites are visited, transforming them into mystical places that somehow hold the essence of a past based on historically documented 'facts'. This has the effect of retaining a focus on the historiographical background of ASSI disempowerment and unrewarded labour, disconnecting the past from the present as it is kept in stasis at these artificial holding places. This also impinges on the ways that sites and collections are managed, and indeed interacted with, giving 'ownership' of the past to a few elite care-takers, be they councillors or private curators.

Alternatively, an Islander perception of the ongoing historical process and their part in it, identifies present lives as continuations of ancestors' lives, serving to remove the focus from the historical sugar industry to resonate with the lived experiences of past and present people, fluidly connecting past to present. In this way a post-indenture identity via these lived experiences and connections to place is claimed through the practice of this memory strategy, which connects extended groups in interactive activities that gravitate around the memory sites. In effect, this usage of western styled

materials-based memory places for such distinctive Islander purposes blends the two memory styles, creating a memory hybrid of sorts. The material culture may have originated from European textual references, but the real work of memory transmission is performed through the communal gatherings held at the memory places. These gatherings can involve the additional hands-on transmission of traditional Islander activities, such as food preparation and fishing skills, incorporating the communication of oral histories which further bridges the past to actual present experiences. Recognition and anniversary claims are also enacted at memory places in similar participatory fashion, elevating the sites from memory holders to active memory builders in their own right. In this way, memory sites are extensions of oral narratives, both in European material format, in which important local knowledge is preserved, and in Islander enacted transmission style, as physical locations at which to communicate personal understandings through participation and ceremony.

ASSI memory material culture then has complex roles in current issues, and similarly to Geismar's research of images as objects, is best understood as:

not only representations or reproductions of social values and consciousness, but rather an intrinsic part of the production of these in the first place. Both the form and the substance of such artefacts were able to consolidate complex ideas hard to express using language alone. In Gell's words, they were "mediating objects" (1998:163), substantively and powerfully connecting diverse interest groups and categories (Geismar 2003:45)

Thought of in this way, memorials as mediating objects, evolve the concept of memory sites holding static meanings, to consider them transitional places, that is, physical locations for negotiating between binaries such as past and future, now and then, us and them, tangible and intangible. Here, although largely constructed within a Western framework, it is possible to address and interact with the evolving dynamic of the ASSI history/memory tension. In this way, the material culture at memory sites can be thought of as transitional objects, where the consumer experiences a reuniting with the past through the object(ifying) effect of 'materialised' memory, which aids in the developmental process of creating a post-colonial identity for Australian communities.

## 9.6 The Role Of Memory Sites

The idea that ASSI-related memory sites contain physical artefacts that communicate the *experience* of memory from the past can be extended to fit the concept that all material culture 'is a cognitive aid with which a group thinks through articulated social, political, ideological or economic values (Pasztor 2005:10). Memorials in this light then, are able to 'represent or reproduce social values and consciousness' and, both in form and substance, 'consolidate complex ideas' (Geismar 2003:2). As objects from the past their very formative emergence into the world becomes part of their accessible communication when the process of their creation is recognised as yet another aspect of the messages they hold.

Indeed, it is hypothesised that 'material engagement is the synergistic process by which, out of brains, bodies and things, mind (cognition) emerges' (Malafouris 2013:58). This relationship between artefacts and human agency, understood as human thought built into and executed through material culture, comments on the way people act, perceive and think, and indeed how they process actual life experiences. Memorials considered in this light, as elements used in human cognition, identity, problem solving, decision making and remembering can be understood as the intersection of materials and social practice. It is, then, this interaction of people with materials within a set of socio-cultural relationships that 'makes material' social and cultural *memories* of experiences (Mills and Walker 2008:4). Thinking of materiality in this way supports the premise that memories are embedded in a material



framework (Alcock 2002:2; Halbwachs 1992:200) which can be understood to offer a vital structural support for the formation of collective memory, with artefacts providing mnemonic traces that have an impact on the senses (Jones 2007:40).

Extending this concept then, if memories are indeed embedded in the physical framework of memorials, those memorials in turn are embedded on the 'broad physical framework that shaped communal experience ... human landscapes' (Alcock 2002:31). Therefore, as memorials take their place as components of the physical and cultural landscapes on which they are set, 'memory can never be far removed, bound up as it is with a community's longitudinal relationship to a particular locale' (Alcock 2002:30). This concept is particularly relevant for an archaeological interpretation of memory, in this case of the ASSI event, providing a pervading connection through the relationship maintained between material culture and memory in the particular local environs.

In reality, everything has a history. It is a history of cultural and natural events, people and things that converge to create the conditions and specific rules for local action. They cannot be divorced from that history, nor can they be divorced from the specific natural and material elements that gave them shape (Martin 2013:38).

ASSI memorials then, can be understood as sites of memory that 'use local memory, or [hi]stories to claim a part in the national historical narrative' (Besley 2005:38). This juxtaposition of localised memories asserting roles in

larger national stories has important correlations not only for ASSI claims of inclusion in Australian history, but also for Australia's role in the global story of colonialism. Indeed Mathew Johnson identifies that 'the major task facing ... historical archaeology in general, is not to shift focus to an exclusively larger scale, but to grasp the relationship between the small-scale and local, wider processes of transformation and the colonial experience' (Johnson in Hall and Silliman 2006:318). Understanding ASSI memorials within this universal theme contrasts localised micro foci to broader macro stories: 'Place and memory are invariably local and particular. They are part of what sets peoples apart from one another, part of particular cultures. But they are also general and universal, since no one is without them' (Campbell 2006:114). It is through historical archaeology's attention to the physicality of commemorative material culture, that is, of 'memory made material', that inherent aspects of the ASSI event and cultural heritage can best be interpreted. 'As soon as there is form, there is message' (Pasztory 2005:10).

## 9.7 Historical Archaeology

As archaeology necessarily privileges the material artefacts of the ASSI experience, the paucity of ASSI-related material culture has previously challenged ingress and served to reinforce the invisibility of the Islander past and perpetuated their absence from the material record. However, as this study has demonstrated, an archaeology based on memory spaces can open a tangible platform from which to articulate an ASSI cultural heritage, and thus play an important role in addressing current post-colonial relationships and inequalities. Further, the focus of the study on an assemblage of ASSI-related public memory places, placing memory objects as the starting points of enquiry, enabled the recognition of complex relationships and networks between the artefacts, human memory practices, and landscapes. This enabled the research to include and move beyond the view of objects as representations or symbols of societies or cultures, to consider the notion of material or object agency and 'how people think through things' (Malafouris 2004:58). From this position, ASSI-related memory sites are interpreted as components in dynamic processes of belonging and identity constructions, communicating through temporal, cultural and social changes.

Memory spaces, and by extension historical archaeology as a means to interpret them, are of particular relevance for remembering 'invisible' minorities, such as the ASSI, where the paucity of material evidence, including dedicated memorials, can be understood to have actively prevented the recall of their existence. Indeed, studies in cognitive psychology of a

theory called retroactive interference suggest that the encoding of new memories can interfere with the recall of previously encoded memories (Reichelt 2015:1). This indicates that, for the ASSI, memory spaces may have an important role in the recall of Islander (hi)stories by competing for expression with other, dominant entangled memory claims. Memory spaces therefore provide an excellent basis for understanding and remembering the forgotten ASSI past, albeit a past that is necessarily,

altered by the new material-social context in which it arrives. It will be reshaped by the process of 'remembering' itself, which is not a matter of retrieving, but of reshaping in a new mechanism of selection altered by the history of the network. Additionally, it will be altered because the subjectivities which remember, the groups and roles and the perspectives they represent, are not the same anymore (Felder et al 2014:5).

In this light, memorials can be understood to both create memories and hold them, and by extension, for the past to influence and create meaning in the present as the present influences and creates meaning regarding comprehensions of the past.

## **9.8 Future Archaeology Focus**

The research showed that ASSI-related memorials and memory spaces are contemporary actions by local communities contextualised in locations across the length of Queensland. Although these locations share common themes of labour, slavery, sugar industry and colonial diaspora, the memory places refer in most part to local histories and situations that are still dynamic and evolving. This indicates a gap for an archaeological study to create operational frameworks for understanding issues of preservation, conservation, and connection of ASSI memorials. A further possibility is the linking of these memory sites into a comprehensive tourist memory trail, offering the opportunity to build a physically accessible ASSI cultural heritage platform that can be added to, and that will serve as a base for collaborative heritage connections for descendants, other local community members and academic, political and general public interests.

Another future area of study would revolve around material evidence of modifications to the conflicting memories surrounding the ASSI indenture event, including the possible creation of a common memory ground as a result of entanglement with other memories, as well as the role that the digital world may have in future ASSI remembrances. Each of these eventualities will bring with them a new suite of questions and challenges regarding the ongoing post-colonial trajectory of the ASSI indenture event.

## APPENDIX 1: Legislation

1868

[Polynesian Labourers Act 1868](#)

Dealt with licenses to import, guarantee of native return, number to be recruited, scale of provisions, and prohibition of liquor.

1872

[Pacific Islanders Protection Act 1872 and 1875](#)

Amended in 1875. Protection of Pacific Islanders from kidnapping and other criminal offences.

1880

[Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880](#)

Repealed the Act of 1868. Provided for regulation and control of the introduction and treatment of labourers from the Pacific Islands. Limited the age recruits. Return to proper islands. Provision of medical treatments. Provision of rations and dress allowance.

1884

[Pacific Island Labourers Act 1884](#)

More restrictive legislation confining labour to unskilled agricultural pursuits. Crews to be paid wages. No fire arms to be supplied to islanders. Limit recruiting operations further.

1885

[Pacific Islanders' Employers' Compensation Act 1885](#)

Compensation to employers whose employees had returned by order of the Government.

1886

[Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 Amendment Act \(1885\)](#)

Prohibited further importation of labourers after 31st December 1890.

1887

[Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 Amendment Act \(1886\)](#)

Amended the definition of Pacific Islanders.

1892

[Pacific Island Labourers \(Extension\) Act of 1892](#)

Repeal of prohibition.

1901

[Immigration Restriction Act 1901](#)

Commonwealth. Received Royal Assent on 23 December 1901. It was described as an Act "to place certain restrictions on immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited immigrants." ref: Dept Immigration and Multi-cultural and Indigenous Affairs Fact Sheet 8

1901-1906

[\*Pacific Islands Labourers Act\*](#)

Commonwealth. Decreed that there should be no further entry of Islanders after 31 March 1901. After that date deportation was to follow, with some exemptions.

1913

[\*Sugar Cultivation Act 1913\*](#)

Designed to prohibit the employment of 'certain forms of labour in the production of sugar'.

Retrieved on 13th October 2014 from <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/Re-searchers/Resources/Pages/Australian-South-Sea-Islander-resources.aspx>



## **APPENDIX 2: Australian South Sea Islander Organisations**

### **Australian South Sea Islander Arts and Cultural Development Organisation**

36 Roberts Avenue, Nth Mackay 4740

### **Australian South Sea Islander Fraser Coast Cultural Heritage Research Project**

8 Meadow Drive, Dundowran 4655

Activities: Cultural, historical

### **Australian South Sea Islander Movement**

41 Roden Street, Keppel Sands Qld 4702

### **Australian South Sea Islanders Secretariat Inc**

Justice Place, 84 Park Road, Woolloongabba 4102

Activities: Advocacy, Cultural

### **Australian South Sea Islander United Council-Mackay Branch**

974 Homebush Road, Via Mackay 4740

### **Australian South Sea Islanders United Council & District**

PO Box 788, Rockhampton 4700

Activities: Cultural, historical and community service

### **Bundaberg and District South Sea Islanders Action Group**

Unit 4, 17 Warrell St, Bundaberg 4670

### **Burdekin Australian South Sea Islander Organisation Inc.**

2 Elizabet Street, Ayr 4807

### **Descendants of the Australian South Sea Islander Association Inc**

C/- Post Office, Bli Bli 4560

Activities: Housing, education, employment, culture and health

### **Innisfail Jubilee Community Housing Assoc. Inc**

PO Box 1978, Innisfail 4860

### **Joskeleigh Community Association Inc**

356 Joskeleigh Road, Joskeleigh 4702

Social and historical

### **Mackay & District Australian South Sea Islander Assoc. Inc**

PO Box 4255, Sth Mackay 4740

### **Mackay South Sea Islanders Community Funeral Fund**

7 Morley Street, Sth Mackay 4740

### **Mount Isa South Sea Islander Community**

PO Box 1834, Mt Isa 4825

**Rockhampton Australian South Sea Islander Community Inc**

276 Bloxsom Street, Nth Rockhampton 4701

(RASSIC Community Hall-Creek St Nth Rockhampton)

**Whitsunday Australian South Sea Islander United Community - Bowen and Proserpine Branch**

PO Box 949, Bowen 4805

Activities:Housing, education, health

Retrieved on 29th October 2014 from <http://www.assis.org.au/assis%20news/ASSI%20ORGANISATIONS%20July%202013.pdf>

Further information can be obtained from: <http://www.assis.org.au/>

## APPENDIX 3: Visitor Centre Email Template

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**

Request for location information

**Date:**

Sun, 29 Sep 2013 13:01:03 +1000

**From:**

Julie Mitchell <[kowl0001@uni.flinders.edu.au](mailto:kowl0001@uni.flinders.edu.au)>

**To:**

Hello,

I am researching monuments and places of memory associated with South Sea Islander indentured labourers (sometimes called Kanakas in the past).

This is for a university thesis looking at the way people remember the past in a physical way, such as memorials, cairns, crosses or simply connections with meaningful places that are well known to the local community, but otherwise difficult to find.

I am visiting your area in October and would appreciate any help you could give me, via email or phone, of locations in your area of associated places, including built heritage or possible grave sites.

Thanks in advance for your time and attention,


Julie Mitchell


mobile: XXXX XXX XXX

## APPENDIX 4: Extended Detail Data Base

Data sheets that were not included in the main body of the thesis but were discussed in context.

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Name                   | <b>12. ROBERT TOWNS STATUE - TOWNSVILLE</b>   |
| Location GPS data      | -19 15.62 +146 49.07  |
| Street Address         | Ogden Street Western end of Victoria Bridge   |
| Date Recorded          | 10/05/2013 by JM  |
| Place Category         | Public park, central  |
| Form / style / fabric  | Life size metal sculpture of Towns  |
| Designer/ Builder Name | Sculpted by Jane Hawkins for Townsville City Council  |
| Dedication Date        | 18/05/2005  |
| Theme(s)               | Local history, people   |
| Inscription            | <p>ROBERT TOWNS<br/>1794-1873</p> <p>Townsville was officially named in February 1866 after merchant and speculator, Robert Towns. Born in England in 1794, Towns went to sea at an early age and was master of a brig trading throughout the Mediterranean before he was 20.</p> <p>From 1827 Towns sailed between England and Australia in his own vessel, <i>Brothers</i>, with emigrants and general cargo. Settling in Sydney as a mercantile agent, he subsequently acquired his own fleet and wharves at Millers Point.</p> <p>Towns' maritime business prospered. His ships transported sandalwood from the New Hebrides; whale oil and beche-de-mer from the Pacific; sugar, tea, rice and coffee from Asia; gold-seekers to California; convicts and cheap labour from India and China. His motto was to sail "to Hades and back if there was a profit in it".</p> <p>By the mid-1850s Towns was wealthy and influential - Chairman of the Bank of New South Wales and a NSW Legislative Councillor. Feted by the Sydney business community and government, he flaunted his success with <i>Nautilus</i>, the earliest steam yacht on the Harbour. He then focused on the north.</p> <p>Towns established Queensland's first cotton plantation at Logan River. <b>He contracted South Sea Island labourers, bringing several hundred to the colony from 1863.</b> By 1865 Towns' northern interests totalled a million hectares of pastoral land, 42 holdings in the Kennedy district alone.</p> <p>He also financed the Cleveland Bay settlement established</p> |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
|                         | <p>by partner John Melton Black. <b>Without Towns' South Sea Islanders their enterprise would have failed. By hand the Islanders removed rocks barring Ross Creek, cleared the mangroves, tilled the plantations and cut the road through Thornton's Gap, linking the port to the hinterland.</b></p> <p>Visiting the area only once in February/March 1866 to inspect the wharf, store, boiling-down works and plantations on Ross Island, Towns wrote: "a most isolated place" and "I never felt so unhappy from home in my life what from bites and blight I have been confined to the house since my arrival here".</p> <p>The partnership was dissolved the following year, Towns assuming full responsibility for liabilities. By 1870, with the pastoral recession, he was on the verge of bankruptcy and liquidated his Townsville investments soon afterwards. Towns died at his home, <i>Cranbrook</i>, on 10 April 1873. He was survived by his wife Sophie (nee Wentworth), and five children.</p> <p>Visionary or villain?</p> <p>Historians are divided. Industrious, thrifty and merciless described his business philosophy. Paternalistic but well intentioned has been the judgement on the contract labour issue. Controversy has plagued the name of Robert Towns both during and after his lifetime. Detractors called him "Godfather of the slave trade". His reputation would have been more substantial without the unfounded rumours of "Blackbirding".</p> <p>City of Townsville + emblem</p> |
| Notes/ Sources          | <p>MA themed People, sub-themed Industry</p> <p>There is controversy around this statue due to Towns supposed connection with the beginnings of South Sea Islander labour referred to by some as the 'Queensland slave trade'</p> <p><a href="http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/qld/content/2005/s1467096.htm">http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/qld/content/2005/s1467096.htm</a></p>  |
| Image                   |    |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Good condition with council upkeep  |
| Access and amenities    | Central town location with disabled access and public conveniences nearby   |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Name                    | <b>21. SOUTH SEA ISLANDER MEETING HUT<br/>LAGOONS MEETING HOUSE (alternative name)</b>  |
| Location GPS data       | -21 09.81 +149 09.30  |
| Street Address          | South Sea Islander Precinct, Regional Botanical Gardens,<br>Nebo Road, Mackay 4740  |
| Date Recorded           | 08/05/2013 BY JM  |
| Place Category          | Public park, urban  |
| Form / style / fabric   | Built to emulate traditional SSI long house. The roof and shutters were thatched by the local South Sea Islanders with Blady Grass - gathered in the district.  |
| Designer/ Builder Name  | Built by council with a building inspector from the islands providing authenticity to the plans in construction.  |
| Dedication Date         | Constructed in 1993   |
| Theme(s)                | ASSI cultural heritage, community   |
| Inscription             | Interior contained a large split tree trunk with etched emotive rhymes dedicated 'The Cane Cutter'.   |
| Notes/ Sources          | Council intention : 'The village is a historical tourist attraction built for access to the broader community with South Sea Islander caretakers in recognition of the contribution they made to the sugar industry in the Mackay district.'<br><a href="http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au/what_can_i_see/the_collections/south_sea_islander_precinct">http://www.mackayregionalbotanicgardens.com.au/what_can_i_see/the_collections/south_sea_islander_precinct</a> |
| Image                   |   |
| Heritage Status Listing | No  |
| Current condition       | Good condition, well maintained and used by the community (Mackay Festival of Arts Launch on evening photo taken)   |
| Access and amenities    | Transport necessary, wheelchair accessible, toilets nearby  |

## APPENDIX 5: QHR Original Record for SSI Sugar Wagon Trail Yeppoon

QUEENSLAND HERITAGE ACT 1992  
Entry in the Heritage Register

HERITAGE REGISTER  
File No 601652

KANAKA TRAIL

DO NOT GIVE AWAY

Name

South Sea Islanders Sugar Wagon Trail, Yeppoon

### History

The South Sea Islander Sugar Wagon Trail is the remnant road works associated with an experimental phase of Queensland sugar production at Yeppoon. The Yeppoon Sugar Company established a mill at Farnborough to service the plantations of the district. The South Sea Islanders Sugar Wagon Trail was roadwork associated with this agricultural experiment.

William Broome grew the first sugar cane in the Yeppoon district at 'Woodlands', near Farnborough. Broome had difficulty running cattle on the swamp and plains country of 'Woodlands' and may have grown sugar cane as a supplementary food for his animals. The Yeppoon Sugar Company, established in 1883, comprised a limited shareholding of local pastoralists, including William Broome, Robert Ross, Highatt Livermore and the Tueson family. The major expansion of the sugar industry in Queensland occurred in the early 1880s, and led to attempts to grow cane in marginal country such as the Yeppoon district. The Yeppoon Sugar Company established the Farnborough Mill, to crush sugar cane and extract raw sugar.

In the process of clearing the land and planting the sugar cane in the Farnborough district, one of the immediate needs was the provision of roads through and around the planted areas; together with roads required for hauling the cane to the mill and to wharves. Among the technical staff employed to establish the mill were a road building crew. This included road engineers Carroll and Lucas and well as foreman Jefferies and field overseer Rutherford Armstrong. At the time the Farnborough sugar mill was founded there was no link road to Yeppoon. The South Sea Islanders Sugar Wagon Trail was built to provide access from Farnborough Mill to Thompson's Point, which was the loading place for sugar boats, a distance of approximately 4.5 kilometres. An earlier track followed the beach around the Bluff but as the tides and soft sand made this impassable to heavily laden wagons, there was a need to cut a track across the very steep hills.

The track was an essential element in the functioning of the plantation and mill. Without it there was no means of transporting the sugar to any point from which it could be exported to market. The road was built to follow the easier parts of the range foothills, avoiding the very deep gully crossings, the purpose being to construct an all weather road.

Large-scale, privately-organised engineering works, such as this track, involving the use of the cheap labour supplied by South Sea Islander people were integral components in the plantation system opening up areas for development that were otherwise inaccessible. The sugar industry in Queensland was pioneered on a system of indentured South Sea Islander labour recruited from the islands off the east coast of Australia. South Sea Islanders arrived in Australia under both voluntary and involuntary arrangements. The *Masters and Servants Act* was enacted to govern employment arrangements for this group. 62000 individual contracts were issued under this legislation. South Sea Islanders came from throughout the Pacific region, and primarily worked in the sugar industry but also found employ in the pastoral and maritime sectors.

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The indentured work force at the Farnborough mill was variously between 200 and 300 South Sea Islanders, of which between thirty and forty were women. Some of the people who worked for the Yeppoon Sugar Company included Peter Santo, Sam Veve, Bill Mackie, Charlie Kura, Charlie Brown, Jimmy Youse, Tom Warkill, Willie Warcon and Charlie Willhow. In 1901, the new Federal Government enacted the *Pacific Islanders Labourers Act*, which made provisions for the deportation and repatriation of South Sea Islanders. Deportation proceedings ceased in 1906 leaving approximately 2500 South Sea Islanders residents in Australia on humanitarian grounds. A number of the men who worked for the Yeppoon Sugar Company married, had families and were not repatriated. Their descendants continue to live in the Yeppoon district and form a vital ethnic group in the community. A South Sea Islanders cultural mapping project has identified this place and other sites associated with the Yeppoon South Sea Islanders community.

The building of the Bluff road in 1894 to accommodate the introduction of steam powered engines rendered the original Sugar Wagon Trail obsolete. The Farnborough plantation and mill closed in 1900 after running for only 16 years. At its peak the Yeppoon Sugar Company had 2500 acres under cultivation. Its rise and fall closely follows the rapid expansion of the sugar industry in the early 1880s and equally rapid demise of marginal plantations in the 1890s. After the mill closed, Rutherford Armstrong, the last manager of the mill supervised the demolition of the buildings and distribution and sale of the salvaged building material.

Of the original 4.5 kilometres, approximately 1415 metres have been identified as the South Sea Islanders Sugar Wagon Trail. Much of the original trail has been destroyed by residential and road development over the course of the twentieth century. During this time, the track in undeveloped areas has yielded to the regrowth of the scrub and natural bushland.

Note: The sugar wagon trail or Karama trail now passes through private land and Council owned land north of Yeppoon. To establish whether sections of it can be visited you need to contact the Livingstone Shire Council (Val Vlex). The trail does not pass through National Park. The trail has been nominated to be on the heritage register but I do not think it has been accepted yet. Omerell RPS Rockhampton.

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