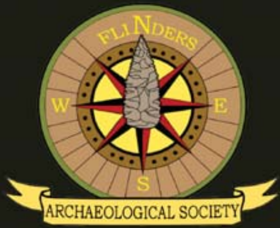

DigIt

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DigIt

Editorial

Dig It is a community product. The total number of people involved in writing, editing, formatting, reviewing, layouting and printing this issue were 39 from 24 different institutions – and that does not even include the greater number of people who provide helpful comments and ideas along the way, or write and talk to us to let us know they appreciate our work – all of which are very important things to keep us going. Special thanks goes out to ArchSoc, who are always there in the background offering practical help at the most critical times.

Compared to the 2014-1 issue, this second issue of 2014 has a more local touch, but still includes reports about archaeological work being done in places as far away as Thailand, Italy, the UK, and South America. We are proud to have encouraged a number of undergraduate and Masters students to publish their thoughts and research. We want to particularly develop this part of the journal by encouraging fresh new authors to share their ideas. One step towards this goal was a book review Master Class, held in November together with Dr Alice Gorman, book review editor of *Australian Archaeology*, that encouraged 16 students to write reviews for *AA* and *Dig It* – two of which readers can find in this issue.

And since *Dig It* is a community product many editors and review panel members will stay on in 2015 when Jordan Ralph will take over editor-in-chief with new ideas and enthusiasm. During the last weeks, we have been preparing ideas for making *Dig It* even more successful in the future. The 2014 *Dig It* team would like to thank ArchSoc for giving us the opportunity to be part of a rewarding and creative experience. I personally would like to thank all authors, editors, and reviewers for the hard work and dedication that is needed to create one of only three peer-reviewed archaeology student journals in the world: *Dig It*!

Jana Rogasch
Editor, *Dig It: The Journal of the Flinders Archaeological Society*
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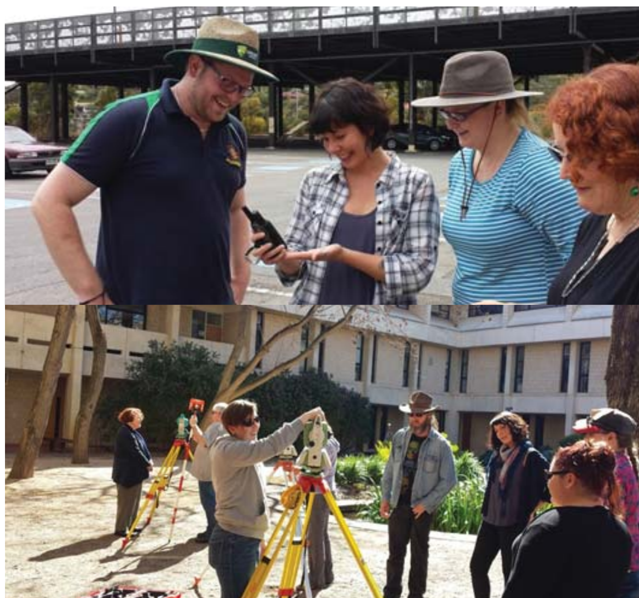

ArchSoc members during Total Station and GPS workshops (photographs by Dianne Riley, 2014)

President's Address

The second half of 2014 was a busy one for the Flinders Archaeological Society. During this period not only did the Society support University events such as O'week in late July and the Open Day in early August, it undertook a new direction. Under the guidance of a new look Executive Committee, ArchSoc organised a series of workshops in order to allow members the opportunity to further develop their professional skills. Participants came together in a relaxed atmosphere and in total three workshops have been held since July; two Total Station workshops (August and September), and a GPS workshop (October). Thanks is especially given to the two professionals, Rob Koch and Jordan Ralph, who gave their time pro bono to ArchSoc, and who also committed to undertaking further workshops in 2015. ArchSoc continued to support the Flinders University Department of Archaeology's Thursday Seminars in 2014 and looks forward to continuing to do so in 2015. In November, ArchSoc also supported the Book Review Master Class with Dr. Alice Gorman.

In October, ArchSoc was asked to take part in the Highercombe Museum Vintage Fair. This was a direct result of the involvement of ArchSoc members in the public archaeology event carried out during *About Time: South Australia's History Festival* in May. As a result of its connection with Highercombe, ArchSoc went on to present a brief overview of the value of potential relationships with branches of the National Trust, at the State Conference of the National Trust of South Australia on 19th November. This presentation was undertaken with a view to setting up future opportunities of field work and research for ArchSoc members.

Overall, however, membership was down for 2014 and this is something that needs to be addressed in 2015. Membership fees will, however, remain at $15, with no concessions, for the coming year. The ArchSoc 5-year-plan (a product of the Forum held in November) is exciting and offers future committees the benefit of an in-place strategy for the future direction of ArchSoc.

In review, 2014 has been an innovative and productive year. To ensure that the vision for the future direction of ArchSoc materialises, continued energy and commitment from all ArchSoc members will be needed in 2015.

Dianne Riley
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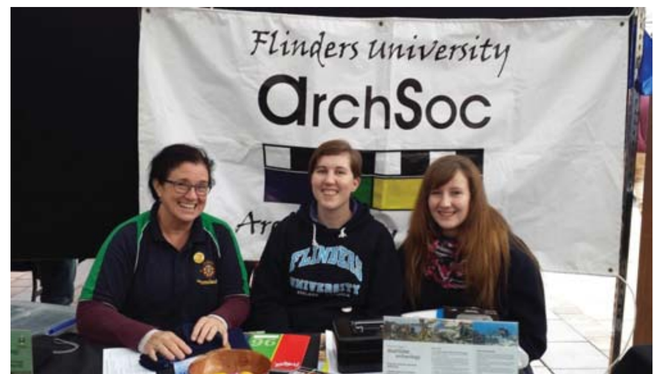

Dianne Riley, Adeena Fowke and Aletta Fowke at the ArchSoc stall, Flinders University O'week (photograph by Susan Arthure, July 2014)

Moonta A'gas Dynnergh?

The implications of Cornish language signage in the Moonta Mines State Heritage Area

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Abstract

In 2010, the first steps were taken towards inscribing the Australian Cornish Mining Heritage Site (ACMHS) as part of a Transnational World Heritage Listing that incorporates sites with a history of Cornish mining influence from around the world with the Cornish World Heritage Site that was inscribed in 2006. The ACMHS is a combination of two South Australian State Heritage sites, Burra and Moonta Mines. With this process ongoing, a discussion of the measures taken to ensure the success of this application is essential. This paper focuses on the implications of making small alterations to a heritage site in order to successfully meet the criteria for a Transnational World Heritage Listing. A key concern with this process is the issue of erecting signage in the Cornish language within the Moonta Mines State Heritage Area, a seemingly innocuous act that, nevertheless, fundamentally alters the nature of the site. This is an issue as the population that inhabited this district, whilst overwhelmingly of Cornish extraction, did not utilise the Cornish language as it had almost entirely died out in the eighteenth century. As this is an issue of South Australian heritage, the Burra Charter *was consulted to indicate the best practice framework that should be in place at this site. This paper, therefore, questions whether such changes to the nature of a heritage site can be accepted as occurring in the best interests of preserving said site.*

Introduction

'Moonta agas dynnergh' ('welcome to Moonta' in Kernewek, the revived Cornish language) is the sign that boldly welcomes visitors to 'Australia's Little Cornwall'. Across many of the heritage locations incorporated within the town, including the cemetery and the Moonta Mines State Heritage Area, Cornish language translations of heritage information appear frequently. Whilst the region does, historically, have strong cultural ties to Cornwall, as will be shown, the issue of Cornish language signage in these locations gives rise to questions of best practice amongst heritage professionals, both at a local South Australian level and at a broader international level. Initially, this inclusion of the Cornish language seems innocuous, especially given Moonta's proclaimed status as 'Australia's Little Cornwall'. However, it becomes an issue when it is remembered that the language was not spoken amongst those migrants who flocked from the failing tin and copper mining industries of Cornwall in search of better opportunities around the globe during the Cornish diaspora of the nineteenth century. This paper will examine the implications of such heritage decisions in the context of a site that is undergoing a rigorous process to become part of a transnational World Heritage listing alongside other Cornish mining settlements around the world. Utilising the *Burra Charter* as a heritage framework, alongside historical investigation and analysis, it will be argued that altering a site in this way is not only harmful to the narrative being preserved, but is also entirely unnecessary.

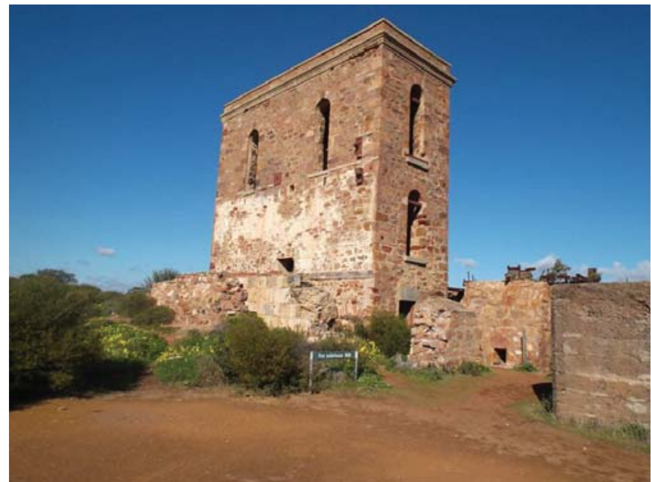

Figure 1: Ruins of Richmans Enginehouse, in operation between 1869 and 1923 and now forming part of the Moonta Mines State Heritage Area (photograph by the author, July 2014)

Historical context

In 1861, copper was discovered on grazing land leased to Walter Watson Hughes at the northern end of South Australia's Yorke Peninsula (Drew 1991:4). Hughes, already the owner of the Wallaroo Mines some 17 kilometres to the north of this new find and established just two years previously, wasted little time in exploiting the mineral resources of the area. Initially, just four men were brought overland from Wallaroo Mines to investigate the potential of the copper lode (Wallaroo and Moonta Mining and Smelting Company 1961:5). This was to become the site of the world-famous Moonta Mines, workings that would eclipse even the wealth generated by the Monster Mine at Burra. Despite its small beginnings, by the end of 1861 some 80 men were employed on the Moonta Mines; 263 by the end of 1862 (Wallaroo and Moonta Mining and Smelting Company 1961:5). Over the next decade, the population of the area grew rapidly. By 170, an illegal, but tolerated, settlement of some 6000 inhabitants had developed on the mineral leases, with the approval of the Moonta Mining Company (Drew 1991:12).

The initial settlers in the region came overland from other established mining districts, chiefly from Burra and Wallaroo Mines (Drew 1991:4). As the mining operations in the region continued to expand, migrants began to make their way directly to the northern Yorke Peninsula following their arrival in the colony. What was so unique about this population was its ethnic homogeneity. As Payton (2005:279) has stated, 'by 1875 it was estimated that there were some 20,000 to 25,000 people resident on northern Yorke Peninsula, mostly of Cornish birth or descent'. Why such a large population of almost exclusively identical ethnicity became clustered in the region demarcated by the three government townships of Moonta, Wallaroo, and Kadina, is a matter for interpretation. For the residents themselves, it was the

direct result of their unique cultural identity that the northern Yorke Peninsula came to be so dominated by Cornish migrants and their descendants. This can be explained through the myth of 'Cousin Jack'. White (2011:225) has presented an analysis of the 'Cousin Jack' myth, arguing that this identity was forged from a culture of 'industrial prowess', one which meant that, in the mid-nineteenth century, Cornish miners were able to find employment in all corners of the globe. That is, buoyed by the knowledge that their skills were in demand around the world, Cornish miners came to see themselves as the best hard-rock miners in the world.

This self-belief was not simply limited to the industrial sphere. As White (2011:225-226) has argued, the 'Cousin Jack' myth also led Cornish migrants to believe that they were uniquely suited to life on the colonial frontier. 'Cousin Jack' was a tough, practical character who was able to adjust easily to the rigorous demands of frontier life, able to cope with any situation it could throw at him. This myth certainly held a dominant position in the psyche of the settlers in the Moonta Mines township. However, 'Cousin Jack' did not travel alone. Just as the population on the mineral leases consisted of individuals of both sexes, 'Cousin Jack's' survival on the frontier was an experience that was shared with 'Cousin Jenny', his female counterpart. Payton (2007:28) provides an analysis of the mythical characteristics of 'Cousin Jenny', showing her to have been an individual who symbolised the belief that 'Cornish women were somehow equipped above all others for the rigours of life on the frontiers of Australasia'. The characteristics of 'Cousin Jenny' and 'Cousin Jack' would have inspired the population in the Moonta Mines settlement to believe that the Cornish, and the Cornish alone, were the people most likely to succeed in such trying circumstances.

The Cornish identity, as a result of the pervasiveness of the 'Cousin Jack' and 'Cousin Jenny' myths, was certainly dominant amongst the inhabitants of the settlement at Moonta Mines. This is evidenced by the work of local historian Oswald Pryor, who focused his attention on disseminating this myth to a wider audience through books and cartoons (Pryor 1950, 1969). The extent to which this myth permeated the society within the Moonta Mines township and the role that it played within the community are discussed in detail by Payton (2005; 2007). The distinctly Cornish nature of the settlement is evident in the transplantation of many unique practices from Cornwall into the South Australian copper mining industry. 'From mining methods, technology and terminology to the system of remuneration in the mines and the "cult" of the "captains" who managed every aspect of these activities', the social and industrial environment of the Moonta Mines was fundamentally Cornish in nature (Payton 2007:4). Mines were known as 'bals', abandoned mines were 'knacked bals', a 'captain' was a mine officer, an individual mine working was a 'wheal', while a shift worked in a mine was a 'coor' (Faull 1983:19). Miners worked on 'tribute' or 'tutwork' schemes; 'tributers' being those paid according to the value of the ore won and 'tutworkmen' being those paid by the amount of ground they mined (Payton 2007:19). Cornish pasties were a staple of the workers' diet and, outside of work, the residents of the Moonta Mines settlement took part in festivals, wrestling, athletics, and singing, pastimes synonymous with the Cornish identity (Faull 1983:19).

Despite the fact that such a large proportion of the population in the Moonta Mines community identified either as Cornish migrants or as individuals of Cornish descent, it is crucial to understand that Moonta was not a carbon copy of Cornwall. Whilst there were many similarities, life on the Australian colonial frontier meant that many aspects of the Cornish identity were lost or altered. An integral part of this process had already begun long before South Australia was even established as a British colony. By the mid-eighteenth century, the process of Anglicisation had radically changed the cultural identity of the Cornish people.

Figure 2: Moonta Mines State Heritage Area from Ryan's Tailings Heap, indicating the extent of heritage work conducted in this section of the Mines (photograph by the author, July 2014)

Payton (2005:13) has shown that Cornish settlers blended, almost seamlessly, with the 'Englishness' of colonies like South Australia. This often meant that Cornish settlers were actively sought after by colonial authorities. Thus, the Anglicisation of the Cornish culture could, in such circumstances, be interpreted as beneficial for impoverished Cornish miners seeking a better life on foreign shores.

With regards to language, as a Celtic community, Cornwall did have its own distinct language; however, it had succumbed to the Anglicisation pressures of the Tudor monarchs following the English Protestant Reformation (Parry 1946:258). The last known speaker of Cornish as a first language was reported to have died in 1777, leaving behind just a few words and sentences that continued to be passed down amongst some within the broader population (Parry 1946:258). Beyond 1777, what remained of the Cornish language became part of tradition rather than functioning as a truly 'living' language. As a result, by the time copper was discovered on the Yorke Peninsula, the migrants arriving from Cornwall would have spoken English as their mother-tongue. This does not mean that, linguistically, the Cornish were entirely indistinct from their colonial counterparts, though. In places like Moonta where large numbers of Cornish people were concentrated in one area, the use of a unique English dialect set them apart from other ethnic groups. Although much of this dialect was directly related to the mining industry, it also permeated everyday life on the Yorke Peninsula. This dialect, whilst drawn from the original Cornish language, is not indicative of the language being spoken alongside English at Moonta during the nineteenth century.

Although many aspects of life in the Moonta Mines settlement find their origins in Cornwall, these were altered over time as migrants adapted to their new environment and as subsequent generations grew up with no experience of life in Cornwall. For White (2011:226), this alteration in identity was an inevitable outcome of the 'Cousin Jack' myth. That is, the Cornish identity did not simply transplant itself into the new South Australian environment as it changed its nature in every part of the world that was inhabited by 'Cousin Jacks'. This concept is also central to Payton's (2007:169) understanding of the community that existed in the Moonta district: 'from the first, Moonta and environs had been proudly "Cornish" but … the institutional life of the Peninsula had, while drawing on this reservoir of "Cornishness", crafted a new identity that was overtly and unmistakeably "Moonta"'. White (2011:226-227) has argued that the fundamental difference between the Cornish identity and the Moonta identity was the fact that Moonta became central to the idea of place and belonging within the latter. Previously, Cornwall had been the geographic and symbolic centre of the identity of the Cornish miner in Australia. As time passed and Cornwall became an ever more distant memory, Moonta began to take precedence as the symbolic centre of the 'Cousin Jack' culture in Australia (White 2011:226-227).

Heritage context

The issue of the Cornish language and its relationship to the identity of the migrants who inhabited the Moonta Mines settlement is of key concern with regards to the heritage status of the area. Designated as a South Australian State Heritage Area in May 1984, Moonta Mines has since been combined with the Burra State Heritage Area which was designated in 1993 (Department of the Environment 2014). Together, these two sites form an area known as the Australian Cornish Mining Heritage Sites (ACMHS). In 2008, the first steps were taken towards gaining global recognition for the unique heritage values represented by the ACMHS with the South Australian Heritage Council nominating both the Burra and the Moonta Mines sites for Australian World Heritage status (South Australian Heritage Council 2011:9). The ACMHS was also nominated for the Australian National Heritage List in 2009 with a decision on its inclusion initially anticipated in June 2013 (South Australian Heritage Council 2011:9). As of August 2014, the sites remain under consideration (Department of the Environment 2014), with the most recent version of the *National Heritage List and Commonwealth Heritage List Assessment* revealing that the anticipated decision date has now been pushed back to mid-2015 (Department of the Environment 2013).

Beyond this, the next step for affording the ACMHS World Heritage status will be to link the sites with Cornish mining heritage areas in Spain, Mexico, and South Africa (South Australian Heritage Council 2011:9). This transnational listing will be connected to the *Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape* that was granted World Heritage status in 2006 (UNESCO World Heritage Convention 2014). Each of these sites is intrinsically linked by the shared heritage of the Cornish mining diaspora which saw more than 250,000 Cornish people leave their home county and migrate to a wide range of mining locations across the globe between 1841 and 1901. These immigrants sought employment to escape the poverty compounded by the decline of the tin and copper industries in Cornwall (British Broadcasting Corporation 2004). Transnational listings are those properties that 'include two or more component parts, spread over different State Parties' (Vileikis et al 2013:319). By 2013, there were six inscribed transnational properties: the Jesuit Missions of the Guaranis, the Frontiers of the Roman Empire, the Struve Geodetric Arc, the Belfries of Belgium and France, the Stone Circles of Senegambia, and the Prehistoric Pile Dwellings surrounding the Alps (Vileikis et al 2013:319). In addition to this, other projects such as the expanse of the Viking World, the Qhapaq Nan, and the Silks Roads of China and Central Asia, remain in preparatory or evaluation stages (Vileikis et al 2013:319).

Linking sites around the world, including the ACMHS, to the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape will ensure that the global reach of Cornish mining practices and the Cornish migrant culture will be recognised and protected at an international level. It is essential that the heritage being preserved within the ACMHS is as 'authentic' as is possible to achieve through heritage practices. Thus, it is necessary to address the issue of the Cornish language translations that feature on guiding signage in the Moonta Mines State Heritage Area. As Article 2 of the *Burra Charter* states, 'the aim of *conservation* is to retain the *cultural significance* of a place' (Australia ICOMOS 2013:3; italics in original). To achieve this, heritage practitioners are encouraged, under the ethical framework of the Charter, to 'do as much as necessary to care for the place and to make it usable, but otherwise change it as little as possible so that its cultural significance is retained' (Australia ICOMOS 2013:3). Through the example of the *Burra Charter*, it can be argued that the use of the Cornish language on signage at Moonta Mines is not in the interest of best practice for heritage professionals.

Discussion

As has been shown, the intrinsic link between Cornwall and the settlement at Moonta Mines cannot be disregarded (National Trust SA Moonta Branch 2014). The utilisation of the Cornish heritage and identity for tourism purposes is, by no means, in question in this paper as the promotion of Moonta as 'Australia's Little Cornwall' is extremely beneficial for ensuring the long-term preservation and survival of South Australia's Cornish heritage. However, there are limitations to the amount of 'Cornishness' that can be proclaimed at the Moonta Mines. Payton's (2007:169) assertion that the 'Cousin Jack' identity that existed on the northern Yorke Peninsula rapidly adopted Moonta as its geographic and symbolic centre supports this argument as it highlights the fluidity of cultural identity and the ability of this identity to change and attempt to new environments over time.

The most significant limitation to the 'Cornishness' of the Moonta Mines settlement is the fact that the traditional language cannot be portrayed as part of Moonta's heritage. As was previously discussed, the Cornish language was no longer in use by the time of the diaspora in the nineteenth century. Without a shared language to bind the sites across Spain, Mexico, South Africa, England and Australia, it is necessary to examine how these disparate outposts of the Cornish diaspora can be considered part of a single transnational World Heritage listing. As White (2011:255) has argued, the Cornish identity was fundamentally altered in Australia to create what Payton (2007:7) has described as the 'Moontaite' identity. If this was the case in Australia, it can be extrapolated that the 'Cousin Jack' identity was altered in different ways on the frontiers of other nations, such as Mexico and South Africa. Thus, in terms of identity, each of the sites being considered for transnational listing can be linked only by a shared point of origin. This is further complicated by the fact that Moonta was unique in its almost exclusive ethnic homogeneity. Even at Burra, the Cornish population, whilst undoubtedly predominate, had many neighbours of Welsh, Scottish, Irish, German, Chinese, and even Chilean origins that flocked to the district in search of work in the mines, the associated smelting industry, and the essential support services required to maintain a population that was over 5000-strong in 1851 (Lawrence and Davies 2010:174-175).

How, then, can such disparate sites be connected to one another? The answer lies in the industrial aspects of the Cornish diaspora. Following the collapse of the tin and copper industries of Cornwall, large numbers of emigrants took not only themselves and their families to new and exotic frontiers, but also their unique mining practices and industrial construction methods. These practices and methods proved to be far more resistant to change than the Cornish identity, as is evidenced by the juxtaposition of distinctively Cornish engine houses in harsh environments including southern Australia and southern Spain (Palmer and Neaverson 1998:72). These engine houses are symbolic of resistance to change because, despite the widely varying climactic and environmental conditions, the construction methods remained the same as they had done in Cornwall. The statement of significance accompanying the nomination of the ACMHS for the National Heritage List supports this, noting that ACMHS demonstrates 'the application of distinctive Cornish technology to the extraction and treatment of copper in Australian mining fields' (Department of the Environment 2014). The ACMHS also encompasses five separate engine houses, all constructed in a uniquely Cornish fashion (Department of the Environment 2014). Thus, the shared mining practices and industrial construction methods found across the globe represent the link between populations with their own unique adaptations of their Cornish heritage as a result of their exposure to vastly different cultural environments.

An industrial link that binds the sites of the transnational Cornish mining heritage listing means that the preservation of Moonta's Cornish heritage need not work against the best practice principles of the *Burra Charter*. The Cornish language was not spoken by the inhabitants of the settlement; their linguistic distinctiveness was derived, not from an entirely different language, but from their unique English dialect. Including the Cornish language on signage at Moonta Mines is introducing a factor that simply was not a part of Moonta's heritage. Acknowledging that the language was not in use at Moonta does not diminish the heritage of the area in any way. Instead, it strengthens it enormously.

Showing that the identity of the Cornish in Australia was fundamentally altered by exposure to a vastly different environment is a crucial part of the story of the diaspora. White's (2011:225) assertion that the 'Cousin Jack' identity varied greatly around the world only adds to this. The history of the Cornish in Australia is a very different story to that of the Cornish in South Africa, in Mexico, or even in Cornwall itself. Using the Cornish language as a means of creating an aspect of cultural homogeneity is disingenuous and entirely unnecessary. As the *Burra Charter* states, heritage professionals must seek to avoid making changes that 'distort the physical or other evidence' that a site provides (Australia ICOMOS 2013:3). Cornish language signage at Moonta Mines is an unnecessary distortion of the region's cultural significance and heritage potential.

Conclusion

The Cornish heritage of the Moonta district cannot, and should not, be denied. Despite this, the inclusion of Cornish language signage at key heritage locations in the area, particularly in the cemetery and the Moonta Mines State Heritage Area, is an unnecessary and unethical distortion of the story of the Cornish in South Australia. In contradiction to the best practice guidelines of the *Burra Charter*, utilising this language on signage presents the visitor with the impression that the language was spoken amongst the large population of Cornish settlers in the region. As has been indicated by historical linguistic research, the Cornish language had largely died out by the mid-eighteenth century and, as a result the migrants flocking to the copper mines of Yorke Peninsula a century later would have spoken a unique English dialect but not an entirely separate Celtic language. Additionally, as has been shown, any attempt to use the Cornish language to create a sense of cultural homogeneity amongst the disparate sites proposed for the transnational World Heritage listing is entirely unnecessary.

The connectivity between Cornish mining locations in Australia, South Africa, Mexico, Spain, and of course, in Cornwall itself is found in the industrial sphere. The exportation of distinctly Cornish mining techniques and industrial construction methodologies adequately represents the global reach of the Cornish during the diaspora. Identifying the socio-cultural and linguistic differences between these divergent populations does not detract from the story of Cornish global migration. Rather, it enriches it, showing how the 'Cousin Jack' identity was altered and developed over time in vastly different cultural and geographic environments. In this way, it is entirely unnecessary

to imply that the Cornish language was a significant feature of life for the migrants to the Moonta district. The 'Cousin Jack' identity, whilst having its basis amongst the identity of those in the home county, was essentially fluid, adapting readily to new environments and conditions across the globe. The settlement at Moonta Mines is a key aspect of the Cornish diaspora story of the nineteenth century and ensuring that the ACMHS remains as true as possible to the realities of life on the South Australian colonial frontier is important for ethical heritage practice at both a local and an international level.

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Dig It is a student-run journal and the official newsletter of the Flinders Archaeological Society. The publication began in 1997 and after a hiatus of at least five years, it was relaunched in 2012. The new series began in 2013. The purpose of *Dig It* is to provide students, from undergrad through to postgrad and recent graduates, with the opportunity to practise and familiarise themselves with writing, publishing, editing and the reviewing process involved in professional publications. It aims to offer emerging young academics with an avenue to engage with archaeological dialogues and discourse. In addition, it aims to keep aspiring archaeologists connected and informed about what is happening in the archaeological community.

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