

The Colonial Goldfields: Visions and Revisions

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Traditionally, the goldfields of nineteenth-century Australia have been viewed as rather wild, dissolute and masculine places — places which were strikingly at odds with the home, family and church-centred Victorian culture which then flourished throughout the English-speaking world. In recent years, however, historians and archaeologists have questioned these conventional representations of the goldfields, asking whether life here really was that different to the rest of the Victorian world. This paper takes up this debate, drawing on historical and archaeological evidence for the occupation of Paradise, a short-lived hard-rock goldmining town on the Burnett River in central Queensland. Occupied during the 1890s, Paradise could well be expected to epitomise the celebrated rough-and-tumble goldfields lifestyle but this is clearly not the case. Rather, the people of Paradise seemingly strove to maintain the very Victorian ideals of comfort, decency and family. This would seem to suggest, as has much recent work, that there was a good deal more continuity than disjunction between the culture of the Australian goldfields and that of the Victorian mainstream.

INTRODUCTION

The gold rushes were one of the most significant events of the nineteenth century in Australia and the United States of America. Beginning in 1840s California and spreading to Australia in the 1850s, the rushes spanned much of the Victorian era (1837–1901), and yet, in many ways, seem not to have been part of the Victorian world. Portrayed as harsh, dissolute and highly masculine places (Bell 1998:29–30; Carnegie 2004:11; Clacy 2003:51; Ward 1958:118–128; 1978:173), the gold towns which sprang up in the wake of the rushes have traditionally been seen as the very antithesis of a Victorian culture which valued domesticity, morality and family above all else (Russell 1994; Young 2003).

Lately, however, researchers have begun to question whether the culture of the goldfields and that of the Victorian mainstream really were so markedly divergent (Davison 1978; Lake 1986; Lawrence 2000; White 1981). Historians have proposed that traditional portrayals of the goldfields are largely a creation of the urban imagination (Davison 1978; Lake 1986; White 1981), while archaeological investigations suggest that life in nineteenth-century gold towns was not that dissimilar to life anywhere else in the Victorian world (Lawrence 2000, 2003). Increasingly, it would seem that the goldfields were not the rough-and-ready frontier towns of popular legend, but rather close-knit communities whose inhabitants embraced common Victorian notions of morality, comfort and domesticity. This paper adds to this growing debate by exploring the way in which these two conflicting ideals, the goldfield and the Victorian, are manifested in the history and archaeology of Paradise, a *fin-de-siecle* Queensland gold town.

Occupied during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and situated in a relatively remote part of Queensland, Paradise is representative of a time and place at which the goldfields culture was reputedly most extreme (Ward 1958:185). However, an examination of three key features of this lifestyle, intemperance, privation and masculinity, suggests that Paradise was not so much a wild goldfields town, as a very Victorian one. Evident here is not the rough, dissolute and masculine existence of the goldfields but rather the comfortable, family-centred and deeply moral way of life typical of the Victorian era. Life in Paradise, it would seem, was much the same as life in any

Victorian town, and this suggests, once again, that there was far more continuity between the culture of the goldfields and that of the mainstream than conventional histories have allowed.

VISIONS OF GOLDFIELDS LIFE

Traditional portrayals of the gold rushes have focussed on the roughness and isolation of a mining lifestyle, emphasising the intense masculinity of the goldfields culture and way of life (Ward 1958:118–128, 1978:173). In such accounts, the goldfields are depicted as places where men laboured alone, free of the responsibilities of family life and the constraints of polite society. Their only obligation was to their fellow miners, their ‘mates’. From this keenly homosocial environment developed a unique masculine culture typified by rough manners, a liberal enjoyment of alcohol and tobacco, and a deep distrust of both femininity and domesticity (Saunders 1984; Ward 1958:118–128, 1978:173).

Ward (1958:128, 1978:173) argues that this culture had its roots in the ‘bush ethos’ of the early colonial period. Growing out of the social and cultural context of the pastoral industry, the ‘bush ethos’ reputedly also emphasised the importance of mateship, the freedom of a life unencumbered by familial responsibility, and the pleasures of alcohol and tobacco consumption. The difference between the two cultures, pastoral and mining, seems to have been one of degree, with the miner apparently taking to extreme the more moderate lifestyle of the drover (Ward 1958:128, 1978:173). Therefore, it is said that while the drover was given to occasional drunkenness, the digger was frequently inebriated; while the drover was unconcerned by matters of etiquette, the digger cultivated the very roughest of manners (Ward 1958:118–128); and while the pastoral industry may not have been particularly friendly to women and children, the goldfields were openly hostile to their presence. Ward contends that this extreme version of the bush ethos, while common to all colonial goldfields, found its purest representation in 1890s Queensland (1978:185), with the unfortunate result that ‘women and children were more ill-used and exploited’ here than in any other part of the colonies (Ward 1978:187).

Such portrayals of goldfields life seem to be directly at odds with the more domestically-oriented culture which

flourished at this time in Australia's cities (Russell 1994; Young 2003, 2004). This urban culture, variously referred to as 'Victorianism', 'domesticity', 'respectability' or 'gentility', developed out of a heady mix of aristocratic manners, Enlightenment rationality and evangelical fervour, and was at once a system of etiquette, a social movement, and a moral code (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992:75–77, 2001:646–47; Young 2003:4–5). From its beginnings in late-Georgian England, the ideology of gentility spread around the globe, finding followers in North America, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia (Young 2003:5–10, 191). Throughout the English-speaking world, gentility operated as a kind of symbolic language; a set of beliefs, practices and material accoutrements through which the Victorians could express and negotiate identity, gender, status, and class (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 2001:647–48; Quirk 2008:60–69; Young 2003:16–23). The culture which resulted from these negotiations was one increasingly centred around the home, family and church, and one which would seem directly antithetical to the rough-and-tumble adventure that was goldfields life.

From these conflicting histories emerge two visions of Australia's past. One, informed largely by life in the coastal cities, emphasises the connections between Australia and the rest of the Victorian world through the shared culture of gentility (Briggs 2005; Lydon 1998; Young 1998, 2003, 2004). A second, associated with the bush, emphasises the privation, dislocation and isolation of colonial life (Saunders 1984; Ward 1958, 1978). It is this latter view of Australia that has defined accounts of goldfields life for more than a century, but this is now changing, as historians and archaeologists rethink the apparent social disjunction between the 'bush' and the 'city' (Davison 1978; Lake 1986; Lawrence 1998, 2003).

Historians suggest that the conventional, masculinist view of the bush stems principally from pieces published by Sydney's *Bulletin* magazine in the 1890s (Davison 1978; Lake 1986; White 1981). The *Bulletin* authors, including such

luminaries as Henry Lawson, Banjo Patterson, and Edward Dyson, wrote frequently of the satisfactions of a simple bush life (Davison 1978:208; White 1981:91–97). In their accounts, the bush was home to a young, vital and inherently masculine culture defined by the bonds of mateship and the easy pleasures of tobacco pipe, beer glass and gambling dice. For much of the twentieth century, these writings were treated as more or less factual reportage, inspiring such seminal works as Ward's *The Australian Legend* (1958, 1978).

In more recent times, however, researchers have questioned the extent to which the works of the *Bulletin* authors factually represent the culture of the Australian bush in the late colonial period. Historians such as Davison (1978), Lake (1986) and White (1981) argue that in writing about the bush, the *Bulletin* authors were not seeking to record frontier life as it was but rather as they wished it to be. These young men were all members of an urban-based Australian intelligentsia growing increasingly dissatisfied with the morality and domesticity of gentility, and devoted to a bohemian lifestyle of gentlemen's clubs, smoke nights and artists' gatherings. Here they were free to drink and smoke and carouse, and here they were free of the feminising, domesticating influence of women (White 1981:93–101). It is this lifestyle, urban, masculine (if not downright misogynistic), hedonistic and intensely homosocial, that the *Bulletin* authors sought to establish as that of the 'true' Australia (Lake 1986:117–18; White 1981:90–105). This 'true' Australia, they believed, was not to be found in the stifling social conventions and 'wowsersish' religiosity of genteel culture in the urban centres, but in the bush. The bush itself, of which few of the *Bulletin* writers had any real experience, had very little to do with this construction, but functioned merely as a 'frame' on which they might hang their ideal (White 1981:99).

In writing of the bush the *Bulletin* authors were not so much setting out to accurately document frontier life, as they were seeking to elaborate their own uniquely Australian utopian ideal

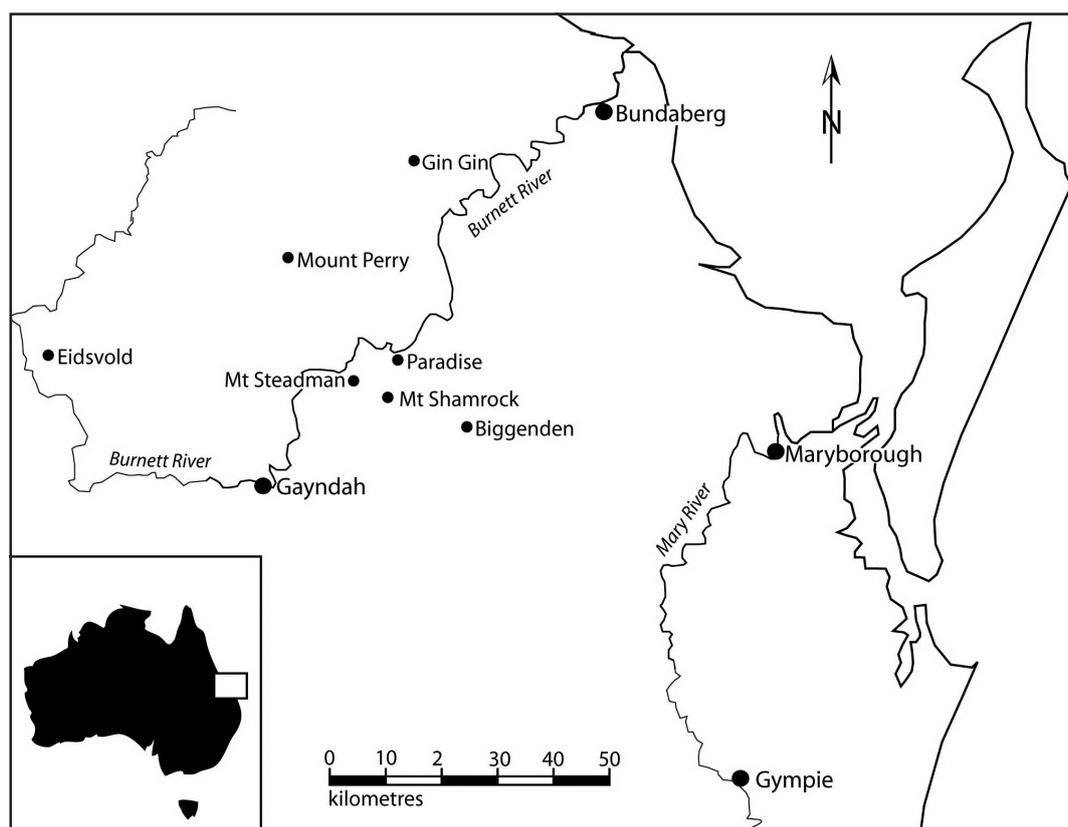


Figure 1: Map showing location of Paradise.

(Davison 1978:192–202; Lake 1986:117–120; White 1981:90–104). Historical reassessment of the attitudes and intentions of the *Bulletin* writers necessarily challenges our conventional popular notions of the bush, and suggests that the longstanding dichotomy between the bush and the city, the wild and the genteel, may be more a matter of fiction than reality.

This is a possibility lent considerable weight by recent archaeological investigations by Lawrence (1998, 2000, 2003) which suggest that life in the bush was a good deal more complex, and a good deal more Victorian, than it appears in the mythologising of the *Bulletin* writers. Comparing the artefact assemblages from three ‘bush’ settings, a goldfield, a pastoral run, and a whaling station, with those from the contemporary urban centres of Melbourne and Sydney, Lawrence found that life outside of the cities was very much like life in the cities. Here in the bush were all the hallmarks of genteel living: fine multi-coloured ceramics and delicate sherry glasses, floral wallpapers and decorative vases, clocks and chamber pots (Lawrence 2003:214–219). While Lawrence (2003:216) found some evidence for alcohol and tobacco consumption at these non-urban sites, there was no sign of the excessive indulgence celebrated in traditional accounts of the bush (Ward 1958:121).

These findings led Lawrence to suggest that there was no true disjunction between the city and the bush; rather than being isolated from Victorian culture, the inhabitants of the bush were ‘fully integrated into the mainstream of contemporary cultural life’ (Lawrence 1998:127). The bush, she argued, may have been portrayed as ‘rough [and] uncouth’ but in reality, its inhabitants ‘laboured mightily to maintain the signs of their respectable status’ (Lawrence 2003:222). Taking a cue from Lawrence’s re-envisioning of ‘bush’ life, this paper seeks to further explore the idea of a cultural continuity between the Australian bush, the city, and the rest of the Victorian world through the history and archaeology of Paradise, a late nineteenth-century Queensland gold town.

PARADISE

Paradise township was founded in 1888 when the Allen brothers, prospectors from nearby Gympie, discovered reef gold on the banks of the Burnett River near present-day Biggenden (Fig. 1). A small group of prospectors and miners set to work almost immediately but it was not until the field’s official proclamation in November 1890 that Paradise’s brief boom began (Prangnell et al. 2005:5–7; Quirk 2008:125–128). Population increased rapidly from a mere 40 to over 600 as people flocked to what was said to be ‘the coming field’ (Queensland Registrar-General 1891–1900; Quirk 2008:134–136). New mines, businesses and industries sprang up, and soon there were five hotels, several drapers, grocers, butchers and bakers, a hairdresser, tobacconist and chemist, and even a lemonade factory (Quirk 2008:141–144). A police station was built in 1890, and in 1891 a Methodist mission station and a courthouse were constructed, followed by an assembly hall and a school (Quirk 2008:144–148). By the end of 1891, however, the tide was already beginning to turn, few of the mines lived up to expectations and soon people began to drift away. Claims were abandoned, businesses closed and families relocated. Although the school remained open until 1904 (Prangnell et al. 2005:39), catering to a mixed cohort of miners’ and farmers’ children, the field was said to have ‘had its innings’ by 1894 (WBBN July 24 1894), and by 1896 was almost entirely depopulated (QCW&MJ November 7 1896).

The remnants of Paradise township were subject to a salvage excavation by The University of Queensland Archaeological Services Unit in 2003 (Prangnell et al. 2004a, b; Prangnell et al. 2002; Prangnell et al. 2003), prior to the site’s inundation by the Paradise Dam. The artefacts recovered from eight residential sites formed the basis of my doctoral research into the workings of gentility in colonial Australia (Quirk 2008). Each of these sites was home to a single family and between them represent most of the Paradise social spectrum, ranging from mine workers to clerks and missionaries, to mine and battery owners. For the most part, excavations focussed on middens, rubbish pits and fireplaces, with 31m² being excavated in total. Surface collections of artefacts were also conducted over the sites (approximately 4500m² in total). This resulted in the overall recovery of some 24,000 artefacts weighing almost 114kg (Prangnell et al. 2004a, b; Prangnell et al. 2002; Prangnell et al. 2003).

The picture of Paradise which emerges from my analysis of the town’s history and archaeology differs considerably from conventional representations of goldfields life. Although occupied in the 1890s, when the bush ideal was being most ardently recommended to the Australian public (Davison 1978; Lake 1986; Ward 1978; White 1981), and situated in Queensland, where the frontier way of life was said to be at its ‘purest’ (Ward 1978:185–187), there is little evidence in Paradise of the harsh, masculine, dissolute existence associated with the bush ethos. Rather, here was something akin to the kind of comfortable, temperate, and family-centred lifestyle typical of the Victorian period the world over.

MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY

A central aspect of the bush ethos, particularly the version associated with the goldfields, is its inherent even belligerent masculinity (Lake 1986:117–120). For proponents of the bush ideal, the goldfields were places dominated both culturally and demographically by men, places which offered a welcome escape from the confines of family life, and an opportunity for masculine independence (Howe and Swain 1992:161; Ward 1958). At Paradise, however, there is little evidence that such an ideal was ever held in high esteem.

At Christmas 1889, a newspaper article quipped that there were ‘plenty of Adams but no Eve’ in this particular Paradise (WBBN January 9, 1890), but this does not seem to have been a situation that the men of the town were prepared to tolerate. Rather, there was concern that the lack of ‘good serviceable girls’ (WBBN September 18, 1890) would impact negatively on matrimonial prospects, and it was proclaimed that women who chose to come to the town would indeed be ‘angels in Paradise’ (WBBN September 18, 1890). In the following months, women did begin to move to the town, and many went on to find husbands among the working men of Paradise. As the correspondent for the local *Maryborough Chronicle* noted in 1891, ‘we have had one wedding lately, and Dame Rumour hath it that two more loving hearts beat as one, and that they intend being joined in the holy bonds of matrimony shortly’ (MC October 20, 1891).

While the single men of Paradise were occupied with finding brides, the town’s married men were similarly busy re-establishing their households. Many had left their families behind while they sought out work in Paradise, and once well-situated, took the earliest opportunity to travel home and bring

back their wives and children (WBBN January 3, 1891). Few men in Paradise, it would seem, were content to live alone and this is clearly reflected in the official statistics for the town, which show that by 1891 almost half of the population was made up of women and children (Table 1) (Queensland Registrar-General 1891–1900). This proportion was to grow in the ensuing years, averaging well over 70 per cent for the latter half of the 1890s (Table 1), at which point adult men, rather than dominating the population, must be regarded as something of a minority.

Table 1: European population of Paradise 1891-1900 (Queensland Registrar-General 1891-1900).

Year	Men	Women and Children	Estimated Total Population
1891	320	300	620
1892	218	290	508
1893	172	340	512
1894*	160	300	460
1895*	140	372	512
1896*	91	286	377
1897*	77	185	262
1898*	64	160	224
1899*	59	196	255
1900^	66	160	227

* Paradise, Mt Shamrock, Mt Steadman

^ Paradise, Mt Shamrock

This willingness to marry and take on (or resume) the responsibilities of family life does not seem consistent with the traditional image of the staunchly independent male miner. Rather, the reported behaviour and sentiments of Paradise men seem to reflect a very Victorian attitude to marriage. In the nineteenth century, marriage ceased to be viewed largely as an economically or politically expedient arrangement, and was idealised instead as the culmination of romantic love, the source of comfort and companionship, and the basis for a loving and affectionate family life (Grimshaw and Willet 1981:153; Young 2003:77). This genteel notion of companionate marriage not only made matrimony a more attractive proposition, but also turned it into a significant source of social status. In a culture which valued women's ability to nurture and men's ability to protect and provide, marriage and parenthood were an integral aspect of both masculinity and femininity, and key indicators of an individual's worth (Grimshaw and Willet 1981:136; Young 2003:77–81). The positive attitude to marriage and family life in Paradise would seem to reflect this romantic, Victorian ideal of marriage.

The influence of genteel Victorian notions of family can also be seen in the ways in which Paradise parents raised their children. The evidence here is not of the 'ill use' to which Queensland children were supposedly put (Ward 1978:187), but rather of parents who strove not only to meet their children's basic needs, but also to provide them with as comfortable, and as *Victorian*, an upbringing as possible (Prangnell and Quirk 2009; Quirk 2008:153–158). The ideal of childhood, like that of marriage, had undergone something of a revolution during the Victorian era. While the Georgians had viewed children almost as miniature adults (Aries 1962:128), for the Victorians children were 'blank slates' who needed to

be carefully moulded into pious and upstanding adults (Fabian and Loh 1980:61, 90; Grimshaw and Willet 1981:136). Key to the genteel childhood was education, both formal and informal (Fabian and Loh 1980:61, 90; Kociumbas 1997:119–122; Prangnell and Quirk 2009), and there is substantial evidence for both at Paradise.

The Paradise assemblage contains, for example, fragments from numerous girls' playthings, including at least three shoulder-plate dolls, one socket-head doll and one 'Frozen Charlotte' doll, as well as two other, unidentified dolls, and five different tea sets. These toys speak not just to the genteel belief that children should be allowed to play, but also to the notion that this play could be used to subtly instruct and influence behaviour (Davies and Ellis 2005:21; Kociumbas 1997:99; Wilkie 2000:100–102; Yamin 2002:118). As the nineteenth century wore on, and women's roles became increasingly complex and demanding, it was felt that girls must be given early training in their future duties, and therefore dedicated parents provided their daughters with dolls to encourage motherly instincts, and with tea sets as a means of grappling with the complexities of etiquette (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992:90–92; Wilkie 2000:101–102). The presence of so many of these items in Paradise, one site featured four different dolls and two different tea sets, suggests that the parents here took the Victorian notion of learning through play very seriously indeed (Quirk 2008:118–119).

There is also evidence of Paradise parents' investment in formal education. Although it was not until 1894 that sufficient funds were raised for a dedicated school building (Prangnell et al. 2005:39), makeshift arrangements for holding classes were in place almost immediately (Quirk 2008:155–156). From late 1890, school was held on the verandah of one of the hotels (MC May 14 1891), and then in late 1891, the School Committee took over the Miners' Hall in order to provide enough classroom space for a cohort of 40 students (MC February 22 1892). That the miners of Paradise would so readily surrender their meeting place to the town's scholars speaks very clearly of their priorities. This act suggests not the guarded masculine independence of the bush ethos, but rather the firm, Victorian belief in the importance of childhood education, and a parent's responsibility to provide this education (Quirk 2008:133).

This emphasis on education is also demonstrated by the recovery from Paradise of more than 30 fragments of slate pencil and more than 150 fragments of writing slate. Although most of these pieces are without any distinctive features, some slate fragments feature the bevelled edges characteristic of framed scholastic slates, and some the widely-spaced etched lines used by children learning to write (Davies 2005; Quirk 2008:183). One of the fragments of slate pencil was found still slotted into a hollow metal holder, a device used by students to make the fragile slate pencil easier to handle (Campbell, E. 2005 pers. comm., 16 August). Such schooling-related artefacts were present at virtually every site at Paradise, and this, added to the ubiquity of gendered toys like dolls and tea sets, suggests that Victorian notions of childhood education and socialisation were well-developed in the town.

HOUSE AND HOME

The focus on family at Paradise is matched by a focus on the home. The goldfields have been traditionally regarded as places of privation, places where miners lived rough in calico tents with only the bare necessities of life (Bell 1998:29–31;

cf. Lawrence 1998:130, 2003:214), but again this does not seem to be the case at Paradise. Many of the first homes (and businesses) in Paradise were indeed under canvas, but by 1890 more permanent buildings began to appear (MC November 1, 1890), and in 1891 it was remarked that ‘where a few months ago only tents were to be seen are now standing good substantial dwellings’ (MC October 20, 1891). These new structures ranged from simple homes of bush timber and bark, to fine large houses of sawn timber with iron roofs and brick chimneys (Fig. 2). Such investment of time, effort and money in the construction of dwellings does not suggest the impermanence or hardship usually associated with goldfields life (Bell 1998) but rather a genteel preoccupation with domestic comfort. For the Victorians, the home was an oasis of peace, security, comfort and refinement, a place that facilitated family togetherness and provided a haven in which to raise children (Fitts 1999; Quirk 2008:163–284; Young 2003).

Such a desire for comfort and refinement is reflected not only in the efforts Paradise inhabitants put into building their homes but also by their attention to interior decoration (Quirk 2008:163–284). Believing that beautiful things make beautiful people (and ugly things, ugly people) (Grier 1997:147–157; Young 2003:174), the Victorians were eager to fill their homes with as many inspiring objects as they could find: attractive ornaments, delicate ceramics, soft furnishings and carpets, clocks, lamps and pictures. In Paradise this taste for ornament and material comfort is attested by a range of decorative, even luxurious, items of home furnishing: vases, clocks, decorative lamps, bowls and figurines, and also upholstered chairs, carpeted floors, and commercially built furniture. That Paradise families were willing to transport such heavy, fragile items over many miles of rough bush road demonstrates just how important were the comforts of a well-decorated, well-equipped home.

A similar degree of care is evident in the effort Paradise inhabitants put into equipping their tables. During the nineteenth century, dining and tea-taking ceased to be merely about the consumption of food or drink, and became instead a vehicle by which genteel ideals might be encouraged, and genteel knowledge displayed (Wall 1991:78–79, 1994:139–148). These occasions became, in the terms of Wall’s (1994) seminal study, a ‘ritual’, and as they did so, the associated material culture became increasingly elaborate, expensive and diverse. At Paradise this trend is reflected in the presence of

ceramic tea and dinner wares at every home (Quirk 2008:163–284). The people of Paradise did not eat and drink from rude metal plates or tins, as might be expected in bush settings (see also Lawrence 2000:132, 2003:222), but rather from fine porcelain tea cups and saucers bearing colourful decals, gilding or hand enamelling, and from transfer printed plates, tureens and serving bowls (Table 2). Indeed, at one residence, the presence of four tureens (amongst a total of nine vessel forms) in a single set suggests not just genteel dining, but the highly fashionable dining *à la Russe*, which required large numbers of covered serving dishes (Beeton 1982:954–955; Quirk 2008:204–206). This style of dining became popular in English and American middle class society only in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Fitts 1999:50), and to find it here, on the very edges of European expansion, indicates just how strong were the ties between this small, ephemeral mining village and the rest of the Victorian world.

A WORD ON VICE

The influence of genteel ideals can also be seen in Paradise inhabitants’ attitudes to the consumption of alcohol and tobacco or ‘vice’, as the Victorians themselves termed such practices (see Quirk 2008:84–85 for further discussion of this issue). Goldfields have generally been celebrated as places of excess (particularly in terms of alcohol consumption) and of freedom from social restraint (Ward 1958; cf. Lawrence 2003), and yet, once again, the historical and archaeological reality of Paradise seemingly belies such representations.

Throughout the nineteenth century a war raged between the opposing forces of ‘home’ and ‘hotel’ (Bailey et al. 2007:145–147; Fitts 2001:116, 123; Tyrrell 1983:293). For many Victorians, the public house was anathema to the genteel precepts of moderation, self-control and piety, and a direct threat to the cherished ideals of home and family. The hotel, it was said, lured men away from their families, encouraged them to squander their pay on alcohol, tobacco and worse, and caused them to forget their responsibilities to their wives and children. The results were poverty and misery, the ruin of the family, ill-health, and even eternal damnation (Australasian Methodist Church 1893:17; Tyrrell 1983:293). To combat this vice the churches and concerned laity alike campaigned against the public house and against drunkenness, encouraging moderation, if not temperance, in an effort to



Figure 2: Allen Street, the main street of Paradise, which by 1891 had ‘assumed a creditable appearance, being studded with shops, pubs, houses...for fully three quarters of a mile long’ (WBBN August 11 1891). Image courtesy Biggenden Historical Society

Table 2: Minimum numbers of teawares and tablewares from Paradise (Quirk 2008).

Ware	Decoration	Jug	Bowl	Plate	Tureen	Saucer	Teacup	Tea Pot	Total
<i>Porcelain</i>	Decal				1	2	2		5
	Gilt					10	6		16
	Moulded					1			1
	Enamelled			1	1	4	6		12
	Transfer printed						1		1
	Unknown			1					1
<i>Rockingham</i>	Moulded					1		1	2
	Enamelled							1	1
	Unknown	1							1
<i>Whiteware</i>	Banded			6	1	6	8		21
	Decal					2	1		3
	Gilt			1			1		2
	Moulded		1	18		1	2		22
	Enamelled			1					1
	Painted (underglaze)		1				1		2
	Sponged					1	2		3
	Transfer printed	3	1	18	3	25	50		100
Total		4	3	46	6	53	80	2	194

‘fight the drink and drive the demon to its lair’ (QCW&MJ August 18, 1893).

Such intolerance for alcohol consumption in Paradise can be seen as early as 1890, when ‘respectable’ citizens requested that a police presence be introduced to the town to put a stop to certain undesirable alcohol-related behaviours (WBBN 4 October, 1890). From historical accounts, the problem seems not to have been with the legal issue of public drunkenness, so much as the moral issue of the consumption of alcohol on the Sabbath, but one Mounted Constable Slade was nonetheless dispatched to the town within the month (WBBN October 30, 1890). Within six short weeks, Slade was able to put an end to the ‘Sunday drinking and occasional night howling disturbance’ (WBBN December 18, 1890), and seems himself to have been somewhat bewildered at the swiftness of his appointment. Rather than a hotbed of iniquity, drunkenness and wild behaviour, Slade found Paradise to be a very peaceable community, and was moved to comment that a ‘more orderly lot of men coul [sic] not be found on any other field’ (MC December 11, 1890). Slade’s impressions seem borne out by crime statistics from the following year, which show that alcohol-related offences in Paradise constituted 4 per cent of all those reported, figures which do not suggest a widespread problem with drunkenness (Queensland Registrar-General 1891).

Regardless of Slade’s apparent success, however, the battle against alcohol in Paradise continued unabated, and October of 1891 saw the founding of a Lodge of the International Order of Good Templars (IOGT), a popular temperance society of the period (MC October 26, 1891). The IOGT received support from many prominent Paradise men and women, and strove to spread the temperance message in

the town by holding regular meetings expounding the evils of drink, and by providing ‘wholesome’ alternatives to the public house, such as dances, recitals and concerts. They also made sure that non-alcoholic refreshments were provided at all town gatherings, a considerable bonus, it should probably be noted, to the business of one Louis Raffin, owner of the local aerated-water works and a founding member of the Lodge (MC February 22, 1892, April 15, 1892; WBBN April 19, 1892; MC May 23, 1892; WBBN July 21, 1892; MC March 20, 1893). Seeking to alert even the youngest of the Paradise population to the perils of alcohol, the local Methodist church also set up a Band of Hope — a temperance society for those aged under 16 — which quickly gained more than 50 members (MC October 26, 1891; WBBN November 10, 1891).

The success of the combined efforts of the police and temperance societies is reflected in the archaeological record of the town. Alcohol bottles were recovered from only two of the eight residential sites excavated: ten schnapps bottles at a site occupied for six years, and a single gin bottle at a site occupied for ten years. While the schnapps bottles represent at least a moderate consumption of alcohol (a minimum of 1.6 bottles a year), neither they, nor the single gin bottle, are suggestive of the type of drunkenness for which goldfields are famed.

The town also evidenced very low levels of that other vice so often associated with drink, the consumption of tobacco. Smoking was not judged quite so harshly as drinking, and there was considerably less organised action to stamp it out, but it was still a matter of concern for genteel reformers (Fitts 2001:116; Walker 1980). The majority of residential sites at Paradise present little or no evidence of tobacco consumption. One site contained fragments from six pipes (five clay pipes

and one composite pipe), while another site contained the remnants of three clay pipes, four of the sites contained only one or two clay pipes, and two sites presented no evidence at all of tobacco consumption. Given that each of these sites was inhabited for five years or more, none of these pipe assemblages seem to indicate a particularly developed tobacco habit, and this suggests, once again, that those in the town who sought to control ‘vice’ could feel quite secure in their success.

DISCUSSION

The goldfields have long been regarded as an entity somehow set apart from the rest of the Victorian world. While this world concerned itself with genteel notions of morality, domesticity and family, the goldfields were seemingly home to a particularly wild, dissolute and inherently masculine way of life. This assumed disjunction between the goldfields and mainstream Victorian culture, however, is coming under increasing scrutiny. Recent critical histories have demonstrated that our conventional understandings of life on the goldfields (and other frontier settings) have been largely a creation of the urban imagination (Davison 1978; Lake 1986; White 1981), while archaeological studies have demonstrated how little difference there actually was between a life led in the heart of the Victorian world, and a life led on its peripheries (Lawrence 1998, 2000, 2003).

This paper has contributed further to this debate by exploring in some depth the historical and archaeological evidence for daily life in the 1890s gold town of Paradise. According to conventional accounts of the colonial period, gold towns at the end of the nineteenth century were the very acme of the goldfields culture, places of wild drunkenness, physical privation, and intensely masculine sociality, and yet this has not been borne out by the evidence from Paradise. The archaeological and historical data presented here suggest a town where both men and women led quite comfortable, moral and family-focussed lives. This is an existence, in other words, which seems to reflect the same set of basic beliefs, goals and values prominent throughout the Victorian world.

Such investments in Victorian lifestyle and culture have also been evident at other goldfields in Australia (as well as in other ‘bush’ settings) (Lawrence 2003), and it suggests that there was not so much a disjunction between the goldfields and the rest of the Victorian world, as there was a continuity. While there were doubtless constant challenges in a life led on frontier goldfields, their inhabitants did not easily relinquish their chosen way of life; rather, they strove on a daily basis to live up to the ideals of a genteel Victorian existence. In doing so, they created a life infinitely more complex, and arguably more interesting, than conventional histories would have us believe.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MC	<i>The Maryborough Chronicle</i>
QCW&MJ	<i>The Queensland Christian Witness and Methodist Journal</i>
WBBN	<i>The Wide Bay and Burnett News</i>

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