



# AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 1 MARCH 2012

Patron: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC

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### EDITORIAL

There is always a certain amount of cynicism when mining companies and governments state they are using development projects to enhance the welfare and economies of underdeveloped nations, but hopefully the recently announced initiative by the Australian Government will prove the cynics wrong. Coinciding with the CHOGM meeting in Perth in October 2011, the Prime Minister announced a multi-million dollar initiative funded by AusAid that involves a joint venture between the University of Western Australia and Queensland University (called IM4DC). The object is to provide the expertise to allow developing countries to enhance their mining resources so as to develop their economies and to provide social benefits and improved welfare to their populations. It is argued that many projects overseas have to date failed to reach their potential through poor management and know-how and it is the intention to draw on Australian expertise to mentor government and mining personnel from a number of countries. Among other objectives this will be achieved through providing technical and budgetary knowledge; through sponsored visits to Australia to learn from on-site activity and workshops; and to improve skills in mining regulation, administration and geosciences.

This in itself is a laudable goal and may

history prove the cynics wrong – only time will tell and in years to come the AMHA may well provide a paper or two that examines the success or otherwise of this laudable venture.

### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

*Hot off the Press – International Mining History Conference.*

Members will I'm sure be delighted to hear that the AMHA is hoping to run its 2014 conference in conjunction with the International Mining History Congress. Kett Kennedy who is currently sorting out the preliminary arrangements has announced the conference will run from 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014 and he promises that it will be an event to remember. Confirmation of the arrangement will be determined at the April International Congress in South Africa in Johannesburg – so keep your fingers crossed that our bid will be successful.

*150 Years of Riches: The Central Otago Gold Rush, 1862-2012. University of Canterbury NZ, 29-31 August 2012.*

The conference focuses on the *Central Otago gold rush* from the perspective of a wide range of disciplines and fields including but not limited to: History,

Archaeology, Maori Studies, Fashion, Literature, Heritage Studies, Tourism Theory, Sociology, Anthropology, Art History, Cultural Studies, Geography, Museum Theory, Cultural Geography, Landscape Studies, Political Sciences, and Urban Development.

Too late if you wish to present a paper but if interested in attending contact: [lloyd.carpenter@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:lloyd.carpenter@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)

### **18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Waihi, New Zealand, 4-11 November 2012**

The registration form is still being finalized and will be circulated with the next newsletter, though it will be available on the web page before that time.

**Note:** There is no direct public transport connection from Auckland to Waihi but a pick-up will be arranged for those wishing to travel on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November. Details will be advertised on the registration form.

**Call for Papers** - See the attached Waihi brochure. Also see the latest programme at the end of the newsletter – though note this could be subject to slight changes.

### **31<sup>st</sup> Australian Historical Association Conference, Adelaide Univ. 9-13 July 2012**

Organizer Dr. Robert Foster is prepared to provide space and time for a mining history stream or session. If anyone is interested in organizing this, or if you wish to give a mining-related paper please contact him at: [robert.foster@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:robert.foster@adelaide.edu.au)

To register for the conference, or to submit an abstract (but hurry, submission close on 31 March) go to the website: [www.theaha.org.au/connections](http://www.theaha.org.au/connections)

The keynote speaker is Professor Sir Christopher Bayly, University of Cambridge, author of a number of books including 'The Birth of the Modern World: Global Connections and Comparisons 1780-1914'

Among the social events will be a Conference Dinner at the National Wine Centre. Another attraction will be the presence of Philip Payton who will talk about his recently published book – see the

publications section for details.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

**Rick Wilkinson, *Twists in the Sand - 50 years in the turbulent life of Beach Energy***, Media Dynamics, Brisbane, 2011. 450, pp. Over 100 photographs. ISBN 978 1 87607 705 1. Cost \$25 plus postage of \$5 within South Australia, \$15 Australia, \$25 overseas.

Member Rick Wilkinson has recently added another valuable publication to his CV that should be of interest to many of our members. It involves the formation and machinations that have punctuated the chequered history of Ossie oil and gas company, Beach Energy. The book examines the company's highs and lows over the past 50 years – the early disappointments as the junior explorer hit one dry hole after another, and then the thrill of discovery. However, with success came the predators, and the company fell into the hands of the shadowy IRL group in 1987, a move that almost spelled the company's demise. Fortunately, as Rick describes, there was a 'Lazarus-like recovery' following a series of court cases in the 1990s, and the result was that under a new management team, Beach blossomed into a strong and diversified energy group. As a business journalist and oil and gas specialist, Rick tells a fascinating and dramatic story that ends on a high note with a description of how the company has emerged today as one of Australia's largest onshore oil and gas producers with promising exploration projects around the world.

Note that \$20 from each purchase goes towards a beach energy nominated charity. The publication order form can be downloaded from Beach Energy's website homepage at [www.beachenergy.com.au](http://www.beachenergy.com.au)

**Philip Payton, *Regional Australia and The Great War: 'The Boys from Old Kio'***, University of Exeter Press, Exeter, 2012 (to be published in April), 272pp, over 70 photographs and illustrations. ISBN 978 0 85989 873 7 (PB), ISBN 978 0 85989 872 0 (HB). Cost \$20 PB, \$60 HB.

Member Philip Payton has added yet another publication to his already extensive bibliography. The book examines the experiences of regional Australia during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War by zooming in on the copper mining communities of South Australia's Yorke Peninsula. 'He draws an intimate portrait of Australia at war, from the lives and deaths of local soldiers – all volunteers – in the trenches far from home to the myriad reactions and activities of those in the community struggling to grasp the enormity of the situation in which it found itself'. It shows how these volunteer soldiers fared in the great battles – from Gallipoli to the Western front and looks at the aftermath in the heady days of 1918.

Lenore Layman and Criena Fitzgerald (eds), *110° in the Waterbag: A History of Life, Work and Leisure in Leonora, Gwalia and the Northern Goldfields*, Western Australian Museum in Association with the Leonora Historical Research Project, 2012. ISBN 9 781920 84368 7 PB, 464 pp, Photos and maps, \$39.95.

This hot off the press publication presents a broad based study of Western Australia's Leonora and surrounds from the 1890s to recent times. Much of the story, liberally illustrated with photographs, is based on oral history interviews with ex-residents of the area, a positive spinoff being that the team of researchers gained access to documents and photographs that came to light as a result of these contacts. The result is a wide social and economic survey of the impact of mining, and particularly of gold mining from the 1890s, though gold and the Sons of Gwalia were not the only mining activities in the area. The text is split into contributions by a bevy of historians – many well known to the AMHA membership, including the editors. The various chapters range from the affect on local Aboriginal populations; to transport structures including woodlines; processing and other technical developments; labour relations; health and safety; social and sporting life in the area; economic conditions and financing, including the fortunes and economic

fluctuations over the period of study. The publication will be reviewed in the next edition of the Journal.

### **BITS & PIECES**

#### ***Mystery of the Klondike Resolved!***

Robin McLachlan has contributed the following interesting piece on the fate of Giles McPherson, one of Australia's pioneers on the Klondike. This adds spice to the other contributions on the role of Australians on that gold field he has presented at past AMHA conferences.

"Thanks to the Guest Weather Report on ABC FM radio's Classic Breakfast, a mystery has been solved. At my request, the weather report was for Dawson City on August 16<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the discovery of gold on the Klondike. Emma Ayers, the programme's host, invited listeners to contact me if they had any information of interest to my 'Diggers on the Klondike' project.

The response from one listener, Bill Macpherson in Busselton WA, proved especially interesting. Bill, in collaboration with Peter Bridge (Hesperian Press) and Professor Alan Macpherson (Memorial University, Newfoundland) shared an interest in the life and career of Gilles McPherson, who went to the Klondike in 1898. McPherson will be well known to many readers for his prospecting discoveries and expeditions in Western Australia. McPherson's Pillar in the Gibson Desert is named in his honour.

The fate of McPherson has long been a mystery. It was supposed in the 1920s, without any evidence, that he had perished in a Klondike blizzard. This has been the generally accepted story ever since and is offered by our patron, Professor Blainey, in *The Rush that Never Ended* (1963), p.173. I grew suspicious of the story after much fruitless searching of Yukon and British Columbian newspapers and official records seeking a contemporary mention of his death, which given his fame ought to have been noted somewhere by someone. While I could locate some possible 'bodies', I lacked conclusive proof as to identity.

The Bill, Peter and Alan Research Collective provided a key document,

namely, McPherson's Scottish birth registration (1 February 1844, as Gillies McPherson), together with a supporting document, his 1892 Western Australian marriage registration (as Gilles MacPherson). His wife (Elizabeth Wisbey) died in December 1893, and their infant son (Donald Graham MacPherson) followed a few weeks later.

With the aid of this information, I was soon able to resolve the mystery of McPherson's death with an online search that took me to the death registrations in the British Columbia Archives. McPherson did not die in a Yukon blizzard. He died on 8 December 1928 in the (B.C.) Provincial Home for Incurables, located in the town of Marpole in Point Grey, a suburb municipality of Vancouver. The cause of death was chronic bronchitis with a contributory cause of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). The death certificate gives his name as Gillis McPherson, born in Scotland on 1 February 1844, marital status widower. His length of residence in Canada is given as 30 years, which would make his year of arrival 1898, the year of the Klondike Rush. The key biographical details on the birth, marriage and death registrations are all in accord, with only slight differences in the spelling of his name. Similar variations are to be found in other records. His first name variations include Gilles, Gillis or Gillies; his surname variations include Mac and Mc, Pherson and Pherson, and even Mcphearson. I have settled for the time being on 'Gilles McPherson', the name by which he is called in Professor Blainey's work and seems best known by among Australian mining historians generally.

Contemporary accounts of McPherson suggest he was a reclusive man, someone with few close friends. He looks to have drifted away from the Klondike without attracting much attention, and in subsequent years did not keep in touch with Australian colleagues. It is understandable that his disappearance might be attributed to a snowy death in the distant Yukon.

Life may not have been easy for McPherson after the Klondike. The 1911

Census of Canada records him employed as a 'canneryman' working a 60-hour week in a salmon cannery in Richmond, British Columbia. His fellow workers on the production line were almost entirely Chinese and Japanese migrant workers, arguably reflecting his place in society according to the social values of that time. His occupation at the time of death, age 84, was given as labourer and it seems very likely this once wealthy man died in poverty. He was buried by the Masonic Order in Vancouver's New Masonic Cemetery (Plot 263, Grave 04, Section D). There is no memorial tablet on his grave.

Sources and acknowledgements for this item can be found online in Gilles McPherson's entry in the project's webpage on [ancestry.com.au](http://ancestry.com.au). More 'Grave Stories from the Klondike' will be found in my article, so titled, in the May-June issue of *Inside History*. I am always delighted to hear from member of the AMHA who may have information on Australian and New Zealand Klondikers.

*Dr Robin McLachlan*, CSU Bathurst  
[rmclachlan@csu.edu.au](mailto:rmclachlan@csu.edu.au)

### **INFORMATION WANTED** *Australia's First Iron-Ore Mine*

John Blockley, one of our members and Secretary of the ESHG is seeking information on Australia's first reputed iron-ore mine. He writes:

"Having a long-standing interest in iron ore, I was intrigued to see a recent Stock Exchange release by a company called **Proto Resources and Investments Ltd** advising that it was planning to re-open Australia's first iron ore mine located at Barnes Hill near Beaconsfield in Tasmania. The announcement states that the deposit was found by Lieutenant Colonel William Paterson in 1804 and developed with financial assistance from Sir Joseph Banks. The Australian Dictionary of Biography confirms that Paterson (1755 – 1810) was a soldier, explorer and gifted naturalist who corresponded with Sir Joseph Banks and even dedicated a book about his exploits to him in 1789. In 1806 he founded a settlement near Launceston in Tasmania

and was made Lieutenant Governor of the new colony. Although the Dictionary records that he reported the occurrence of iron ore in the vicinity of the settlement, it does not mention that he developed it. However, Tasmanian Geological Survey Mineral Resources Bulletin No. 6 (W H Twelevtrees and A McIntosh Reid, 1919) confirms that a few tons of ore were taken away by Paterson's ship, *Lady Nelson*, in 1806. A report by P B Nye (later a Director of the BMR) on drilling carried out by the Tasmanian Department of Mines in 1930 indicates that the ore is laterite formed over serpentinite. It also shows that it contains relatively high amounts of chromium, which could be the reason that it has not been developed to date.

All of this seems to have the makings of an interesting item for a future Newsletter and I am wondering if any Member who may have more information about this early discovery of iron ore and its connection to Sir Joseph Banks would care to pass it on to me — or even contribute an article him/herself?"

John can be contacted at:

[tiger-eye@inet.net.au](mailto:tiger-eye@inet.net.au)

### *Capt William Pleitner*

Bryan Pleitner is researching the mining activities of his great, great uncle, Capt William Pleitner who was actively involved in mining during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. He is particularly interested in finding photographs, and also any other information that members might have come across in their researches.

Capt. Pleitner appears to have been held in high regard by his peers and while resident mainly in Adelaide, during his career he was active in his own area but also in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia. He was a mine manager but also travelled extensively to inspect mines and report on their viability. In Western Australia, for example, he travelled from the Eastern goldfields to the Murchison. In South Australia he discovered the Bird in Hand mine at Woodside and was requested by the SA Government to visit Europe to report on new methods on treatment of ores in the early 1890s. He was a foundation

member of the SA branch of the Australian Institute of Mining Engineers (1892) and also performed as an examiner for the School of Mines in SA.

He was appointed manager of a number of mines including the New Era (1888), Bakers Creek (1888), Hillgrove (1889), and in addition, was manager and director of Blackbornes mine in Southern Cross (1893). In 1906 he became involved and was a director in the Warrenben Oil Claims.

If you have any information Bryan Pleitner can be contacted at: [bryan@pleitner.com](mailto:bryan@pleitner.com)

### *Gold miners, Meekathara, WA*

Neal Porter is seeking information on his grandfather Thomas Porter who came out from Ireland to Western Australia where, along with two prospectors Soich and Meehan he found gold at Nannine-Meekatharra. If anyone has any information or if you can suggest sources where information is available can you please contact Neal at: [chiller6@optusnet.com.au](mailto:chiller6@optusnet.com.au)

### *Canoona Mine, Queensland*

Jill Morley (nee Arnold) is keen to find information on the Canoona Mine (in the Mt Morgan - Rockhampton area) and on a relative, William John Arnold, who discovered gold there in 1931. She is also keen to trace a photo or photos of the mine. If you can help, Jill can be contacted at: [jillmorley@bigpond.com](mailto:jillmorley@bigpond.com)

### *More on Adelaide Residences!*

Peter Bell reports that according to the *Advertiser*, there's another piece of Adelaide mining history real estate on the market. This refers to *Carawatha*, said to be Sir George Brookman's house, built in 1880, and based on his fortune made in Moonta.

"Moonta?!", did I hear you say? As far as Peter is aware, Brookman had no connection with Moonta. In 1880 his business was a grocery store in King William Street, and he doubts that he had the money to build this house.

In fact, the story contains elements of

truth in garbled form. The house was built for Brookman in 1886, after he'd become a serious investor, but long before his WA mining adventures. If he ever lived there it was only briefly, and a few months later the title was transferred to his father Benjamin. In 1890 this house was sold to Charles Drew, who'd made his money as a storekeeper in Burra and Moonta. The same year Brookman built a new house nearby (later called *Ivanhoe*) where he lived until his death. (Peter recalls that *Ivanhoe* was also on the market a year or so ago).

Even the name *Carawatha* is not historical. Until a few years ago this house was called *Craigmellan*. Perhaps the AMHA could offer a mining history service for real estate agents!

### **FUTURE NEWSLETTER DELIVERY**

We are still awaiting a large number of membership renewals but before sending in your payments please look at the two boxes provided on the membership form that ask you to tick if (a) you wish to allow any of our officers to contact you by e.mail on AMHA business (this has to do with privacy laws) and (b) if in future you would be happy to receive the newsletter by e.mail. From responses to date it appears that many folk are ignoring this part of the form.

While on the **membership renewals**, if sending your fees by electronic transfer please **include your first and second names** on the payment instruction when submitting at your bank. As mentioned previously, we still have two unknown payees from last year, and one mystery person who sent his \$25 from the bank at Illawara in February of this year. As a reminder, a membership form is enclosed if you haven't yet renewed your membership.

### **FUTURE PAYMENTS**

We are currently looking into various payment systems that will allow members to register for conferences or membership subscriptions on line. We are looking at systems such as 'Pay Pal' that can be accessed via our web page. This will certainly make it easier for our overseas members and will help avoid the usurious

fees charged them for electronic transfers and for charges for cheques. This will still allow those Australian bank members to pay by cheque or by Postal Order if they so wish. The system should be up and running by the time we send out the Waihi Conference registration forms.

### **WAIHI CONFERENCE DETAILS**

(Subject to possible minor changes)

*Monday 5<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November*

2-day Field trip with night stay at Coromandel.

*Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> November*

8.45am - President's Welcome.

9.00am -12.00pm - Paper sessions.

1.45pm - Martha Mine visit.

3.30pm - 6.00pm – Paper sessions.

7.30pm - Drama club play.

*Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November*

8.30-12,00pm - Paper sessions.

12.45 - Union Hill guided tour.

2.00pm - 5.30pm – Paper sessions.

6.00pm - Meeting of Executive committee.

*Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November*

Visit to Thames with evening meal at Waihi Beach RSA and address on mining archaeology.

*Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November*

8.30am - 3.00pm - paper sessions, including joint sessions with Labour History project group.

4.00pm - AMHA Annual General Meeting.

*Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November*

Field trips:

Battery Waitekauri Valley and Golden Cross plus Waikino battery.

Alternatives:

Helicopter flight over Martha Mine (15 minute flights).

Waihi Cemetery visit.

In total, an anticipated 26 papers by AMHA members and local historians, plus three papers by Labour History Project historians on themes of interest to AMHA members.

See enclosed flyer on call for abstracts

*MJD/March/12*



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## Newsletter No. 2 JUNE 2012

Patron: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC

ABN 96 220 329 754

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### EDITORIAL

Hitting the headlines at the time of writing is the topic of importing workers from overseas to fill the alleged shortage of Australian workers prepared to move to the wilds of furthest West Australia. Especially noted has been the decision to grant Gina Rinehart access to up to 1,700 workers for her Roy Hill iron-ore development. This of course is not the first time that the suggestion of bringing in foreign workers has raised controversy and members will be well aware of opposition in times long past when Chinese migrants sought opportunities on various gold fields. Again, at the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century questions were raised that led to the banning of Pacific Island workers from entering the Queensland canefields.\*

In the West, there was opposition in the 1920 and '30s to the recruitment of Italian and other European workers to the goldfields that amounted to xenophobia and the odd riot, in a period when the 'White Australia' policy was well and truly supported by most employers and employees in the country as a whole. In the Kimberleys and other areas of the far north of Western Australia, however, there were forces that supported the introduction of Melanesian and other workers. One such supporter was eminent politician Sir Hal

Colebatch. In the 1920s, Colebatch had been the West Australian Minister for the North-West and had campaigned vigorously to settle the hot, humid and thinly populated regions of the north of the State. With there being little likelihood that white settlers would develop this inhospitable environment, he saw this as the only chance to achieve development.

Thus the idea of bringing in overseas workers to the somewhat hot and inhospitable regions is not a new one, but as in the past, the issue is still one which attracts a great deal of opposition. In the long run, of course, opposition breaks down and our history shows that the vast majority of immigrants have remained to make valuable contributions to the economic and social wellbeing of Australia.

There are arguments that Australia should have foreseen the need for skilled and semi-skilled workers before the current mining boom and that there should have been much more emphasis on the training of our own workers. There is much merit in this observation. However, nothing is smooth and recent media attention of the failure to attract workers from the other side of the country to the West shows that even where there are pockets of suitably skilled workers, the process of transferring these across a continent larger than Europe

is easier said than done, especially when facilities for families and appropriate infrastructure such as affordable housing are lacking. This, despite the attraction of large paypackets, shows that the business of migration is a complex issue, perhaps needing more forward planning than is evident in the current 'hot house' development that has hit Western Australia, in particular. Mining historians and demographers of the future will no doubt look back with great interest at this moment in history!

\* One of our members, Lyndon Megarrity has an excellent article on this issue: see, Lyndon Megarrity, ' "White Queensland": The Queensland Government's Ideological Position on the Use of Pacific Island Labourers in the Sugar Sector 1880-1901', in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-12.

### **JOURNAL – Dearth or Plenty!**

Last year the editor was presented with more papers than could be accommodated. Unfortunately, this year, even with the overflow from those who missed out in Volume 9, there is a situation of drought! This is therefore a plea for people to urgently submit any articles that they think would be acceptable for our journal. There is space for both refereed and un-refereed papers, and any submissions would be greatly appreciated.

*The Ed.*

### **CONFERENCE REPORTS**

#### **9<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress, S. Africa, 17 – 20 April 2012**

##### *Report 9<sup>th</sup> International Mining History*

##### *Congress, S Africa 17-20 April 2012-06-15*

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress was recently held in Johannesburg. The Congress was a great success, well organised and very well supported by sponsors, including the two Johannesburg universities, the local mining industry and the National Union of Mine Workers. Highlights included the congress opening by Kgalema Motlanthe, Deputy President of South Africa; congress banquet at the Rand Club; excellent one day field trips to the TauTona gold mine at Carltonville and Sishen iron ore mine; and the post congress field trip to Barberton. The organizing committee led by Peter

Alexander, the conference secretariat masterfully managed by Richard Bailey, and the scientific committee all deserve great credit. A small contingent of Aussies included Ken McQueen, Erik Eklund and Kuntalla Lahiri-Dutt, with other attending AMHA members being Jeremy Mout and Roger Burt.

As mentioned below, in 'future conferences', a bid for Australia to host the 10<sup>th</sup> AMHC in conjunction with the AMHC in Charters Towers in 2014 was successful. Ken McQueen gave a short presentation on the attractions and delights of the venue and there was great interest in the prospect of coming to north Queensland.

*Ken McQueen*

### **Swansea 'Copperopolis' Workshop**

In our December 2011 issue we announced the forthcoming workshop to be held at Swansea University, Wales, in April 2012. The Workshop, one of a series of three to be held in key areas where the 'Swansea' method of smelting was adopted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, proved a great success and among those present and who contributed to the proceedings were members Greg & Lynne Drew, the Secretary, and international members, Roger Burt (UK), Peter Claughton (UK), Philip Payton (UK), Sharron Schwartz (UK), Jeremy Mouat (Canada), and Jay Fell (USA). Jason Shute, who last year presented a paper at the Handorf conference was also present to read a paper on South Australia's links with Swansea. Other areas discussed had to do with social issues, environmental issues, smelting in Chile, Ireland, and the USA, the role of key entrepreneurial figures and the decline of Swansea following smelting being increasingly undertaken in other countries

The second workshop in the series that's being organised by Swansea University and supported by the Leverhulme Trust, will be held at **Burra, South Australia**, between the **24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012**. Any member interested in attending should contact Greg Drew for details and arrangements, at: [gldrew@internode.on.net](mailto:gldrew@internode.on.net)

A third workshop will be held in Chile in April 2013, and a publication is planned when the project is finalized.

### **FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES**

#### *International Mining History Conference.*

Members will I'm sure be delighted to hear that our bid to promote the 10<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress at Charters Towers in 2014 has been successful. It will be run in conjunction with the AMHA's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Kett Kennedy who organised our very first conference at James Cook University, Townsville, will again be leading the team, and has already put much work into the planning. When the offer was made at the recent South African Congress, there was widespread support from the international delegates and we expect to see a fair number of visitors fly to Queensland for the event.

#### *18<sup>th</sup> AMHA Annual Conference, Waihi, New Zealand, 4-11 November 2012*

See the enclosed registration form for the Waihi Conference. The New Zealand organizers suggest that because of competing activities at the time of the conference you should book your Waihi accommodation sooner rather than later.

With respect to registering, note that another conference payment option has been opened on-line via '**Register Now**'. Access this via our webpage at <http://www.mininghistory.asn.au> If you wish you may still pay by cheque, but for overseas visitors to Waihi, it will probably be cheaper to use the Register Now system, rather than to use a bank cheque or other method of transferring and changing to New Zealand dollars.

On the registration form you will need to **indicate the time of your arrival in Auckland** if you want road transportation to Waihi, which is about 3hrs 30mins from Auckland by road. Also details of return flights are requested. Pickups will be available at the airport at set times.

Note that the 'Register Now' option will also be available for renewing membership fees later on in the year.

#### *19<sup>th</sup> AMHA Annual Conference, Beechworth, Vic., September/October 2013*

Planning for the Beechworth Conference is progressing. Tours extending to Eldorado, Chiltern, Rutherglen, the Buckland Valley and to the Bethanga copper field plus the Yackanda alluvial gold fields are currently being explored by the local committee.

The theme for the conference is 'Diversity in Mining'. Given the range of mining techniques employed and the mix of minerals worked in the region, the organizing committee regard the theme as appropriate. However, papers reflecting all aspects of mining history will be welcomed, and the committee looks forward to a bumper crop.

The timing of the conference follows AMHA preferences and occurs during a common university break. As this coincides with Victorian school holidays it would be advisable if delegates were to make accommodation bookings sooner rather than later. A range of accommodation is available, including motels, B&B, cottages and some hostel style facilities. A comprehensive list of options will be made available with an information brochure that will be available at the Waihi conference. The organizing committee will not be in a position to make accommodation bookings on the behalf of delegates. The dates for the conference are as follows:

- Saturday 28 September – Pre-conference tour.
- Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Registration, Local tours, Official reception.
- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> to Friday 4 October – Business sessions, except for a mid-conference tour on Wednesday 3 October.
- Saturday 5 October – Post-Conference tour.

For intending tourists and those unfamiliar with the area, four books are suggested as useful pre-reading; Woods, Carole, *Beechworth, a Titan's Field* (1985), Phillips, June, *A Poor Man's Diggings*:

*Mining and Community at Bethanga, Victoria, 1875-1912* (1987), Lloyd, Brian, *Gold in the North East* (2006), and Talbot, Diann, *The Buckland Valley* (2004). There are many others, and of course, local web sites. Hope to see you there,

*Mike Williams (Convenor)*

## **PUBLICATIONS**

*Kay Fraser, A Remarkable Gift: 100 years of the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust, University of Queensland Press, 2012. Cost \$40.*

In recent times there has been much comment in the press about the 'stinginess' of our wealthier members of the community when compared to American philanthropists. It's therefore salutary and a relief to record the contribution of one mining entrepreneur that has survived for a period of 100 years in providing relief for needy persons.

Following the death of Mt Morgan mining magnate Walter Hall in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, his wife Eliza established a Trust fund in his memory. Worth the then enormous sum of £1 million when inaugurated in 1912, the trustees still operate today to assist individuals, to provide tertiary scholarships and to endow charitable organisations such as the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne.

The book provides insight into the functioning of the fund and its trustees over 100 years of activity but also provides background detail on Walter and Eliza. As some of our readers will know, Walter died in 2011 aged 80 years. Born in England, he had arrived in Australia in the mid 1850s with just a few pounds in his pocket but through enterprize he eventually grew to become a wealthy businessman, being involved in the transport industry, pastoral activities, and of course in the Mount Morgan gold mine.

### **'Digging & Drilling Australasia'**

Those members interested in Oil and Gas will be interested to hear of a new publication *Digging & Drilling Australasia*, which will be available in print and on-line. By the time you read this

the first edition will have been published but the editors are interested in getting mining content and invite members to forward any current and interesting mining industry news for consideration. The website for the magazine is: [www.DandDmagazine.com](http://www.DandDmagazine.com), and General Manager Len Fretwell can be contacted at [len.fretwell@DandDmagazine.com](mailto:len.fretwell@DandDmagazine.com) or Tel. 04-1700-1080.

*Ross Mainwaring, Riches beneath the Flat: A history of the Lake George Mine at Captain's Flat, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Inc., 2012. 104 pp., 62 photographs and diagrams.*

ISBN 978 0 909340 49 0 (pbk).

Price \$29.70 + \$6 postage.

Member Ross Mainwaring provides a detailed account of the history of Captains Flat with its gold and base metal production that went on from the 1880s to its final closure in 1963. Ross has tackled this previously lightly researched topic by using newspaper accounts and company records stored in the Noel Butlin Archives of Business and Labour at the Australian National University. He looks at the fluctuations in the fortunes of the mine overtime, the geology and capitalisation of the field, the working conditions, technical problems and solutions. As the Light Railway Research Society handles the publication it comes as no surprise to note that there is special attention and focus on underground and above ground transportation, an area in which Ross is particularly well versed having spent most of his life employed on the railways.

To obtain a copy (with special rates for LRRSA members) contact LRRSA Book Offer, PO Box 21, Surrey Hills, Vic. 3127, or fax or ring 03-9701 8221, or order on line at: [www.lrrsa.org.au](http://www.lrrsa.org.au)

## **BITS & PIECES**

### ***Elevation of the Humble Pasty!***

Members might remember the pride with which Keith Johns and other pasty-eating members of Cornish descent lauded this rather humble delicacy in past correspondence pages of this publication. (See Newsletters, No. 3, Issue 46, 2006 and

No. 3, Issue 84, 2008). Well, I'm sure Keith and all Cornishmen will be delighted to hear that the said delicacy has been elevated to aristocratic levels by revelations exposed in the *Australian*, *The Wall Street Journal* and in leading British newspapers such as *The Times*, under the heading 'Pasty Spat Exposes Upper-Crust Tories'. In this scandalous affair, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, had the temerity to suggest that VAT exemption for hot baked goods should be scrapped. In this attack he specifically mentioned the Cornish pasty and compounded his sin by pointing out that he couldn't remember the last time he'd eaten one. Prime-Minister Cameron the next day announced he had recently purchased one from the Cornwall Pasty Company, though in turn he was crucified for choosing a Company that was 'too posh'. The Labour representatives were quick to suggest that the Conservatives were out of touch with the average Briton, the latter presumably feasting on less exotic fare than did Cameron. Thus the humble pasty once again finds its niche in British history by exposing the class differentials that still exist in society. Keith Johns, yet another tit-bit to put under your belt along with a Cornish pasty!

**P.S.** – On 30 May it was announced in the British Parliament that the pasty had been made exempt from VAT. Another great triumph for meritocracy!

### ***Museum Link, Waihi***

Nick Williams in her never-ending hunt for 'Oertlings' (mostly gold-weighing scales) has tracked a couple down at a museum near Waihi. The location lies near the site of the Waikino Battery, some 8km from Waihi town. Nick was very impressed with their web page and suggests that our members might be interested in opening the page. The address is:

[www.waihimuseum.co.nz](http://www.waihimuseum.co.nz)

### ***Queenstown Exhibition***

Thanks to Ross Both and Gordon Boyce for sending in a one-page article from the *National Trust News* that provides some details on the important contribution of

Robert Sticht to pyritic smelting into Australia when Manager of the Mt Lyell Mine in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While members will know much of the information on Sticht's contribution, especially perhaps from the pages of Geoffrey Blainey's book, *The Peaks of Lyell*, of particular interest will be that the National Trust is currently developing an interpretative exhibition of his contribution in Sticht's old office precinct in Queenstown. The exhibition, supported by the Tasmanian Community Fund, is scheduled to open in October.

### ***Bill O'Neill***

Those many members who remember Bill O'Neill will be pleased to hear that a memorial to Bill has been set up at the Trades Hall in Broken Hill. Partner, Dallas Bartley says she is still combing his memorabilia, and as he was a member of about thirty organisations during his lifetime, there's a lot to get through. Dallas still remains a member and has insisted that Bill's name be kept on the books, especially, she states, as he delighted in attending our conferences and being part of the organisation. Something to be looked forward to is an edited article written by Bill that will be published in the next volume of our journal.

### ***Opening of Museum in Rossmoyne, TAS***

Volke Hahl, one of our keen Tasmanian members writes: 'While a good deal of the activities of members consists in writing erudite articles and books some lesser mortals have been busy in other directions. On the Ben Lomond Tin Field in Tasmania were the Storys Creek and Aberfoyle mines and associated towns. The mines closed 30 years ago, the Storys Creek township has disappeared and Rossarden has dwindled to about 50 residents. Recently, however, some concerned locals decided to set up a small museum in the old school building, many old photos of the towns, communities and mines were gathered along with maps, documents and other items of memorabilia. All this is housed and on display in two classrooms and a porch. The locals have done quite a

good job under the circumstances and it is of interest to both former locals and visitors alike. The largely unadvertised opening attracted about 150 visitors, mainly former residents, some from interstate. Any member, their friends or acquaintances passing through the area should call in for a visit'.

*Volke Hahl*

### CONGRATULATIONS (1)

Member [Ray Boyle](#) was recently the recipient of a medal from the Queensland Division of the Institution of Engineers. The award was in recognition of Ray's sterling service over many years, with the citation reading 'This award recognizes meritorious service by an individual in the pursuit of Engineers Australia's goals in the interest of the profession'. Ray has been a member of the Rockhampton group of the organisation for 52 years and has also been a corresponding member of the Queensland Division Heritage Committee since 1980, and of the National committee since 1990. The AMHA is pleased to hear of this award and congratulates Ray on same.

### CONGRATULATIONS (2)

Congratulations also to [David Branagan](#) who will be the first recipient of the inaugural Tom Vallance medal that will be presented at the International Geological Congress, Brisbane, this coming August. The medal is awarded to recognize people who have made a significant contribution to researching, recording, investigating, documenting and/or publishing about people or places or events of historical importance to the geological sciences in Australia/Australasia. David is a worthy recipient, for as noted in the e.mail *Bulletin* of 18 April, put out by the Earth Sciences History Group, David has 190 publications to his credit, of which some 100 are concerned with history of geology, including his major biography on Professor Edgeworth David. He has also contributed much to education and public interest in geology through his various field guides. His knowledge of the early history of geology in Australia is without equal today

and in a sense he took over where Tom Vallance left off, though it should be noted they did do some joint papers together. He was President of the International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences for four years and is still active in that organization, and will be arranging an historical field excursion for Members prior to the IGC in Brisbane this year. David is indeed a worthy recipient of the first Tom Vallance Medal.

### INFORMATION WANTED

*Kelwyllyn Rawson Moure*

Brett Fitzgerald asks whether anyone can furnish information on a family member who was in the Oil/Gas/Coal exploration area at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries?

The person concerned was Dr. Kelwyllyn Rawson Moure who was renown for his Drilling and Geological skills. He could also have been known as Kelwyn Moure, K.R. Moure, or even by the name of Edgar Hasler (Brett's Grandmother's Great Uncle).

While he did a lot of Oil/Coal/Gas exploration around Australia, activities during his early life cannot be substantiated. He was apparently born in the USA (Ohio) in 1862 and came to Australia in the very early 1900's. He worked for the Federal Government in Papua New Guinea, around 1913, but took ill soon after joining the service. He had patents to his name and apparently had a mining lease in the Gladstone area. Its also believed he searched for Oil/Coal and Gas around the following areas: Gippsland area (VIC); Southern NSW – in the field of Oaklands (Coorbin); the Gladstone area (QLD); Adelaide area (SA) – Coorong field; somewhere in the Northern Territory; Papua New Guinea; and possibly West Africa.

While Brett has a number of documents to show where Kelwyllyn was at certain points of his life, there is something of a mystery about his early period, and it is apparent, that this man known as Kelwyllyn Moure isn't who he seems to be. One supposition is that he may have been born in Australia in 1874 under the name of

Edgar Claude Hasler, but there are so many inconsistencies in his life story that Brett would appreciate any light that members might be able to shine on his ancestor. So all you would-be Sherlock Holmes characters out there – should you have any information or suggestions, please contact Brett at: [brettfitz@ozemail.com.au](mailto:brettfitz@ozemail.com.au)

### *Cunninghar Mine, NSW*

In a previous newsletter, (Issue 25, No. 2, June 2001) David Hooker had little luck when asking whether any of our members could furnish information on the activities of his grandfather, Brian Harvey Hodgson Hooker – who managed various mines in NSW, QLD, SA, and WA, New Zealand and Borneo. In that request he specifically asked about his activities at the White Feather and Ivanhoe mines in WA. David has since received documents from London's Kew Gardens Archive that relate to his time at the **Cunninghar Mine**, NSW, in 1886. Much of this details his education at various institutions, his activities as Assayer and involvement with ore-dressing machinery and problems in treating auriferous pyrites. The hardships of mining in this era are reflected in his comments to Dr Hector F.R.S., Wellington,

‘At the present moment I am engaged as Assayer to the Cunninghar Quartz Mining Co. in New South Wales near Murrumburrah at a salary of £4.4 a week; they are trying to smelt auriferous pyrites with lead in a blast furnace, which process ought to succeed. I am fairly satisfied with the place as a start, but would not have a moments hesitation about throwing it up if any better position offered itself, as the place is awfully rough, a regular mining camp in fact, accommodation bad, nearest town 15 miles off and not a book to be got to read anywhere, in fact there is no alternative between working and sleeping’.

If anyone has any information on his grandfather or on the Cunninghar Mine, then David would be delighted to hear from you at:

[dick\\_noelhooker@yahoo.com.au](mailto:dick_noelhooker@yahoo.com.au)

### AMHA OFFICIALS

Is there anyone out there s prepared to take on a job as Assistant Secretary, or of Treasurer? If so, would you put your name forward for consideration prior to the Waihi Conference so that your offer can be considered at the Annual General Meeting? With old age stealthily creeping up, your current Secretary/Treasurer won't be around forever and it would be nice to have someone in the wings prepared at some time in the future to take over the above duties. Any offers appreciated.

### FROM THE AHA NEWSLETTER

The [State Library of NSW](#) David Scott Mitchell Memorial Fellowship and the Merewether Scholarship for 2012 are now accepting applications. The David Scott Mitchell Memorial Fellowship is for the research and writing of Australian history using the Mitchell Library. The Merewether Scholarship is for the research and writing of 19th century NSW history using the Mitchell Library. The closing date for applications is **2 July 2012**.

For further information see:

<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/awards/index.html>

### DEATH NOTICE

It is with sadness that we report the death of one of our founder members, **Diane Menghetti**, who passed away at her daughter's home in Florida, on 18<sup>th</sup> June, following a long illness. Some time ago, Diane sent us a very stoic letter in which she announced in a very matter-of-fact way that she expected to last only a couple of months. However, she survived for over a year longer than her doctors predicted. Diane contributed a great deal to our organisation and to mining history in general and will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

If you wish to extend your condolences please contact Diane's daughter, Garda at: [Gardajohn@aol.com](mailto:Gardajohn@aol.com) 3204 West Santiago St, Tampa, Florida, 33629 USA. An obituary to Diane will appear in the next newsletter.



# AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 3 September 2012

Patron: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC

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### EDITORIAL

As mining historians we will all be aware of the significant changes that have taken place in mining technology over time. One item that caught my eye brought this into focus recently when *The Australian* (17 July 2012) published a short article on Innovation under the heading 'Rock sorter creates ore sorts of interest'. Being aware of the 19<sup>th</sup> century methods of assaying copper ores that involved miners and the mine captains making piles of ore that were then halved, quartered, and sampled by taking out 'prills' that were deemed as representing the quality of the ore before they went off to be assayed by a chemist made the latest development all the more interesting, especially as the new method has been estimated to raise copper production efficiency by a massive 20 per cent. This revolutionary technique, comes as a result of investigation by the CSIRO that involves the use of sensors using radio waves to grade chalcopyrite ores. This it is claimed will allow low grade ores to be segregated from higher grade ores, as the radio waves will be able to probe rock piled almost half-a-metre high on a conveyor belt moving at 5metres a second. Conventional equipment then diverts low grade or waste rock. Thus for the first time it will be possible to measure quality of minerals in bulk. It is planned to give a field trial to the

system at one of the mines operated by Newcrest Mining later in the year.

We shall await the results with interest and if the sensor works as well as estimated then it will mark another major innovation in the history of metal recovery. As stated, this will move us far away from the slow and laborious (and sometimes not too accurate) means of assaying and selecting ores of various quality, adopted in our past.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note that the Annual General Meeting will be held at the Memorial Hall, Waihi, New Zealand, on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November, commencing at 3.30pm. Any motions or items for discussion should be sent to reach the Secretary by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October.

This year, proxy forms will be sent by mail to all members and we request that these be sent to the New Zealand address at the bottom of that form. The form has to arrive at least two days before the AGM. An addressed envelope will be enclosed with the form (unstamped!) – please make an effort as this will allow you to participate in the governance of the Association. **If not present at the AGM, persons wishing to nominate for positions on the Executive, or the Committee, should communicate with the Secretary before the meeting.**

## CONFERENCE REPORTS

### Swansea 'Copperopolis' Workshop

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop of the 'Copperopolis' group, organised by Swansea University to celebrate Swansea, Wales, as the centre of world smelting for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (see last newsletter), took place at Burra, South Australia at the end of September. Papers were presented by a number of international speakers among who were UK members Roger Burt, Philip Payton, and Sharon Schwartz. In addition local members, Peter Bell and Greg Drew presented papers. Greg and Lynne Drew did an excellent job when making the local arrangements that ranged from accommodation to catering, and trips around the heritage areas in the area. The international presence was augmented by a large local component, including many of our South Australian members, the total attendance being in the order of between 50 to 60 persons. All together, a very successful meeting that will help contribute to a publication to be produced after the next and final 'Copperopolis' meeting in Chile in April 2013.

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

### 18<sup>th</sup> AMHA Annual Conference, Waihi, New Zealand, 4-11 November 2012

Just a few housekeeping points for those lucky enough to be attending our annual conference:

- Those having difficulty in finding accommodation at Coromandel during the two-day tour should try booking at the Coromandel Court Motel.
- Because of space restraints bring only what you have to on the Coromandel trip. But note as a visit to the Broken Hill mine is envisaged then bring clothing suitable for underground. A backpack to carry drinks is also advisable.
- If requiring transport to and from Auckland and Waihi, there are three coaches a day that service the route. Contact on the web: *Intercity Bus Lines Auckland*.
- Re the Waiorongomai walk: All you (hopefully) fit people should arm (or

leg) yourselves with good bush walking boots, a sun hat, parka, backpack to carry a water bottle, lunch, snacks and a small torch. Shorts are also recommended. No snake repellent needed, this, like Ireland, being snakeless, though insect repellent is advised to ward off the sandflies.

### Labour Migration in the Asia-Pacific: Race, History and Heritage, February 14-15, 2013

In view of recent debates over migration, and of labour migration to fill mining vacancies in particular, members may be keen to participate in a symposium being put on by the Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts (IPPHA), at the Australian National University, Canberra. If so, details can be found at:

<http://ippha.anu.edu.au>

If wishing to present a paper, an abstract of 200 words should be submitted by 1 November 2012, to Dr Marshall Clark at; [marshall.clark@anu.edu.au](mailto:marshall.clark@anu.edu.au)

### Cornish Association of South Australia – Biennial Seminar, Wallaroo 23 May 2013

The seminar will be held as part of the Kernewek Lowender festival. The organisers are making a call for papers on topics related to the Cornish in Australia, or on the Cornish in Cornwall that can illustrate differences or similarities in aspects of life in the various Cornish societies. Abstracts of not more than 250 words should be submitted before 28 October 2012, to Dr. Jan Lokan, PO Box 515, McLaren Vale, SA 5171, e.mail: [janlokan@acer.edu.au](mailto:janlokan@acer.edu.au) Registration forms are also available from Jan.

### NAMHO Conference - Aberystwyth University, Wales, 28 June to 1 July 2013

The conference on Mining Legacies: examines the impact of historic mineral working and ore processing on land, landscapes and perceptions of place and looking at the multiple legacies of historic mineral extraction. The event offers the opportunity for field visits to relevant mining sites in the Ceredigion uplands.

Over the last four thousand years

mining has left a footprint on the environment, leaving both visible and hidden legacies for today and the future. Evidence of past mineral extraction can be prominent in the landscape as spoil heaps, discharges, dressing floors, mine entrances, derelict buildings, rusting machinery, transport infrastructure and settlements. Other remains are less visible, such as earthworks indicating sub-surface remains and subterranean workings, heavy metal residues, sometimes dating back thousands of years captured in polar ice caps or peat deposits. Less tangible still are the socio-economic, political and cultural impacts of mining, such as in the sense of place and identity, the development of heritage and alternative economic pathways, and the moral dilemmas of current and future mineral exploitation that these historic sites have often provoked and represented over time. Papers are invited on all aspects of the mining legacy.

Investigating, in some cases, rectifying and also promoting the post-industrial landscape can inform our knowledge of mining over the last four millennia. This conference aims to bring together practitioners from a variety of academic disciplines, industry, the public sector, heritage charities, and independent researchers. For further information contact: Dr Peter Cloughton: [p.f.cloughton@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:p.f.cloughton@exeter.ac.uk) (01437 532578) or Dr Catherine Mills: [c.j.mills@stir.ac.uk](mailto:c.j.mills@stir.ac.uk) (01786 467583)

ICHSTM Congress, Manchester, UK, 22-28 July 2013.

A call is being made for papers to be presented at the ICHSTM Congress in Manchester. The symposia may be of interest to some of our rock wizards, as there will be sessions on Geology in Art, and on Literature and Geologists in the Field. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 October 2012. See: <http://conectahistoria.blogspot.com/2012/09/call-for-papers-symposia-on-geology-in.html>

## JOURNAL

Its nice to report that there was a good response to the appeal in the previous

newsletter for more papers for forthcoming Vol. 10 of the journal. Members can expect another bumper and interesting edition. In a *The Ed.*

## PUBLICATIONS

Erik Eklund, *Mining Towns: Making a Living; Making a Life*, University of New South Wales Press, 2012, 400pp, PB, ISBN 9781742233529. AUD\$49.99 (AUD\$45.45 ex-tax) NZD\$59.99

Member Erik Eklund has just added this publication to his bibliography of published works. The book that should be of interest to our members, for as the cover note accompanying the book says:

‘At any given moment in our history Australia has been in the middle of a mining boom. This timely book is a history of the iconic Australian towns that arose with these booms over a century: Broken Hill, Mount Isa, Queenstown, Mount Morgan, Port Pirie and Kambalda. *Mining Towns* shows the rich cultural and historical legacy these towns helped create as townspeople – those working below the ground and those above – sought to make their lives in them. The current ‘fly-in-fly-out’ mining culture means we may not see the likes of them again, which, as this book shows, will be a great loss’.

Erik will be having a special launch at our forthcoming Waihi Conference, and it will be reviewed in the next volume of our journal.

## BITS & PIECES

Olympic Dam – ‘Much Ado about Nothing’ (with apologies to Wm. S.)

This astute piece has been contributed by our ever-vigilant ex-President:

‘On 22 August BHP Billiton announced that their proposed expansion of the Olympic Dam copper-gold-uranium operation was postponed. The South Australian news media went into a frenzy. It declared that the announcement had "dealt a blow to the economy" and the state had "lost" 44 billion dollars. (There was no calculation to explain how the figure was arrived at, nor did they say precisely where all that money was located before it went missing). The *Advertiser* newspaper put out

a special edition with eleven pages on the story. No less an authority than Alexander Downer compared the announcement to the disastrous collapse of the State Bank in 1991. Even ABC News referred to the "moth-balled Olympic Dam expansion". It's puzzling how you could mothball something that doesn't exist yet, but obviously a lot of people thought that something bad had happened. Perhaps the miners have sold their message too well.

Then the blaming started. The State opposition blamed the government; the State government blamed the previous State government; the Federal opposition blamed the carbon tax and the mining tax, although the opposition leader said he hadn't read the company's statement. The next day he said he had read it; he was answering a different question when he said he hadn't. Within 24 hours what the opposition leader said he hadn't said was attracting more media time than Olympic Dam.

In fact, BHP Billiton wouldn't have paid any mining tax, and they said the carbon tax had nothing to do with the announcement. Instead, they pointed to weakening demand for copper in China, falling uranium prices in the wake of the Fukushima reactor disaster, and costs imposed by the high Australian dollar. The words of the company's announcement were that "it will investigate an alternative, less capital-intensive design of the Olympic Dam open-pit expansion, involving new technologies, to substantially improve the economics of the project."

In other words, the media headlines should have read, "Nothing Happened Today". The announcement had no effect on the South Australian economy, and no-one lost any money. The 44 billion was apparently someone's guess of what might have been invested over the next 20 years. The Olympic Dam expansion is still on the books, but it may take longer and look different when it happens. The day after the announcement, Olympic Dam was still the biggest industrial enterprise in South Australia, the largest one-site employer with 4,200 workers, and after only 24 years in business, one of the most productive

mines in Australian history. Nothing has changed, except that a few people with over-heated imaginations may have been disappointed. Strangely, no one has blamed the 'Lizard's Revenge', a rally by anti-nuclear protestors who chanted 'Shut Roxby Down' at the gates of the mine a month earlier. They're probably congratulating themselves for bringing about the announcement and there's no harm in that!

*Peter Bell*

### **Interview with Geoffrey Blainey**

Keen eyed Ken the hammer wielding super geologist provides the following information for the benefit of members:

The Australian Geoscience Council has recently embarked on developing a series of educational and promotional videos under the theme of 'Geoscience in Australia'. The first of these, recorded earlier this year, features a talk/interview by Peter Couchman with our esteemed Patron, Professor Geoffrey Blainey, in which he broaches the subject of how Australia has been shaped by mineral discoveries. The video captures Professor Blainey's inimitable story telling style and should be of great interest to our members. The interview can be viewed on line at:

<http://www.agc.org.au/index.php/geoscience-in-australia>

*Ken McQueen*

### **New Career**

Congratulations to **Barry McGowan** who has been involved in the making of a film on Lasseter's reef that was released at the Melbourne International Film Festival (Australia), at ACMI Cinemas, on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> August. Called *Lasseter's Bones*, This is based on the story of Lewis Harold Bell Lasseter who in the late 1880s claimed to have discovered his El Dorado in the Australian outback. Barry has been researching Lasseter for many years and there is a belief by some who have noted his frequent overseas trips that he has actually cracked the secret but that he's not saying anything because of taxation, Centerlink and other concerns. Meanwhile, as well as attending the Film Premier,

Barry has recently taken up skiing and tennis – surely signs that enhanced by his discoveries of Lasseter's gold he has entered the Playboy stage of life! For a quick preview of the film, see: [www.scribblefilms.com.au](http://www.scribblefilms.com.au)

### **INFORMATION WANTED**

#### **George Hall, Alexander Wilson Castle and the Gwalia Consols mine at Lake Violet**

Alwyn Evans, one of our Welsh members (we actually have four) who is currently researching the life and activities of Welsh-Australian entrepreneur George W. Hall, the initial developer of the Sons of Gwalia mine before Hoover's managership, is looking for information on Hall's subsequent mining ventures between 1899 and 1910. It is known he purchased the Euro Mine on behalf of his company, the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, and then he and Castle worked the Essex and Lake Violet mines near Wiluna as one mine. This was under the title 'Gwalia Consolidated/Consols', following that company selling the leases of their 'Gwalia' properties to the Sons of Gwalia Ltd.. Gwalia became the major mine in the 1902-1908 period following its opening near Wiluna. However, there appears to be little documentary evidence of their activities there. There is even less evidence after Castle's sudden death in 1905, but from the time Bewick Moreing took over the lease in 1908 more evidence becomes available. The best source found so far is Phillip Heydon's, *Wiluna, Edge of the Desert* (1996) reprinted by the Hesperian Press, but there is still relatively little there on Gwalia, and Hall and Castle don't even receive a mention.

Hall had by 1907 followed his mentor and senior partner William Pritchard Morgan to China on one of that entrepreneur's wildcat ventures, though Hall's son Frank remained at Wiluna as a mining engineer. If anyone has information on the Wiluna period, or indeed, has heard of any references to Hall and Morgan in China and Korea, Alwyn would be glad to hear from you at [alwynazo@aol.com](mailto:alwynazo@aol.com) or text 00 44 7968649434. Contact from anyone with information on Pritchard

Morgan in his earlier escapades in Queensland would also be appreciated.

#### **Missing Records**

Robert Protheroe Jones (yet another Welshman!) has been working on the Swansea based Copperopolis project and is anxious to obtain information from anyone who might have copied information from the documents on the smelters, as detailed below. Unfortunately, the SA State Library has mislaid the documents that were contained in leather-bound volumes. If you have previously worked on these documents and retained notes, abstracts or have copied any of, or parts of the documents please contact Robert at: [Robert.ProtheroeJones@museumwales.ac.uk](mailto:Robert.ProtheroeJones@museumwales.ac.uk)

(1) English & Australian Copper Company: printed annual reports 1852-1874; London, annual 1852-1874; bound in 1 vol.

(2) English & Australian Copper Company: Report of Committee of Conference ...; London, 1857; bound in 1 vol, 17, [3]p.

(3) English & Australian Copper Company: Deed of Settlement; [London?] [1851?], bound in 1 vol, 58p.

#### **OBITUARY – DIANE MENGHETTI (1940-2012)**

In the last newsletter we announced that following a long illness, our late and esteemed member, **Diane Menghetti**, had passed away in Florida, on 18<sup>th</sup> June. The following tributes are provided respectively by friends and University colleagues, Jan Wegner and Kett Kennedy. While Jan concentrates on Diane's academic achievements, Kett presents a glowing picture that illustrates Diane's many and varied human qualities.

**DIANE MENGHETTI** (1940-2012) was Associate Professor of History and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Science at James Cook University. She was Head of the School of History and Politics for a term and after the School was disestablished, was Head of Discipline of History. She began work at James Cook University in 1982 and researched and taught Australian History (especially mining history) and

Queensland Cultural Heritage until her 'retirement' in 2003, when she became a consultant historian. Following retirement she went to Florida to join her daughter and grandchildren. Diane also taught at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest, where she introduced the discipline of History to the Australian Studies Unit; and in the Australian Studies Unit at the University of Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby. At other times she worked in both the Commonwealth and the Queensland public service and taught in primary and secondary schools.

Diane was among the first mature age students to be accepted into James Cook University. She graduated with First Class Honours in History, followed by a University Medal and the Jean Farnfield Prize in Australian History in 1980. Her PhD on the history of Charters Towers was awarded in 1984.

Diane was a member of the Queensland Heritage Council and an Expert Assessor for Heritage. She was on the Executive Committee of the National Trust, Queensland, and was also President for a term. She was made Honorary Fellow of the Queensland Museum and Vice-President of the Townsville Museum and Historical Society. She was also a member of the Queensland Professional Historians Association and on the Management Committee from 2000 to 2006. She was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Australian Mining History Association. She provided editorial services for the Board of Institute of International Affairs, North Queensland Branch (1989 and 1997-2003), the Editorial Board of *Clionet* (1993-2003), later *Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History*, and was Editor of the Professional Historians Association (Qld) Newsletter from 2003 to 2006.

Diane worked on a number of public history projects. These included a project to locate, collect and store all available materials pertaining to the now-vanished mining town of Blair Athol. This project, which included the collection of a significant amount of oral history, was

undertaken over a period of four years and included the writing and publication of a book called *Blair Athol: the Life and Death of a Town*. Blair Athol Coal, a CRA subsidiary, underwrote the project. Another public project involved researching the mining history of Ravenswood and compiling a set of heritage trails for tourists visiting that town. The trails are documented in a guide-book, *Ravenswood: Five Heritage Trails*. Carpentaria Gold, a subsidiary of Mount Isa Mines, underwrote this project. She was also one of the principals in a heritage consultancy for Carpentaria Gold, an EIS for areas around Ravenswood.

Diane also published other books: *I Remember: Memories of Charters Towers*; *The Red North*, a history of radical politics in north Queensland during the depression of the 1930s; *A Century Not Out – 1906-2006: The St Vincent de Paul Society, Townsville Diocese*; and a history of the Japanese in Queensland, *Sound of Our Summer Seas*. She was co-author of *Caged: the first half century of the Magnetic Island to Townsville Swim and Townsville in War and Peace, 1942-1946*, both with Geoff Hansen. Her other work include more than fifty journal articles and conference papers as well as some heritage journalism.

Diane was the academic in charge of James Cook University's North Queensland Photographic Collection and the North Queensland Oral History Project from the 1980s. She led a project to digitise these collections and their indices to enable better access to students, researchers and the public.

She was a highly regarded historian who believed that local history (including North Queensland mining history) was important. She also believed that history should be accessible to everyone. Diane was active in furthering history and heritage in a wide range of organisations. Her energy, insight and generosity will be sadly missed.

*Jan Wegner*

### **Some Anecdotal Recollections**

With a preview of Dr Janice Wegner's thorough, though dispassionate tribute to Diane Menghetti's academic career, community service and other attainments, I decided to focus on the humane aspect of a friend and former colleague.

Diane's death mid-year 2012, in Tampa (USA), was not unexpected. She had known for some time the medical diagnosis, stoically accepting the inevitable, and spent her months with daughter Garda and grandsons.

Diane first set foot on James Cook University Campus in late 1975 when she applied to enrol as a provisional matriculant in the School of Education. Admissions' officers rejected her; in one of the rare occasions in life, tears ran down her cheeks as she wandered aimlessly through a rear exit corridor which led into the Department of History.

Fortuitously, in a life-changing encounter, she bumped into Paul Rose, the Departmental Reader who noticed her distress and struck up a conversation. Rose was notorious for thrusting himself into every academic dogfight, or when the Campus was calm, would start one himself. He told her to wait in his office and stormed off to the Dean of Education then Dean of Arts. In short, Diane was granted mature-age entry on the proviso she majored in History.

Over the subsequent three years, she attained High Distinctions in all History subjects, collecting a swag of prizes. For her Honours thesis she had a choice of supervisors: Professor Brian Dalton, Henry Reynolds or myself. As Bogart remarked to Claude Raines in *Casablanca* – "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship". And it certainly was a wonderful supervisor-student academic relationship.

After First-Class Honours, University Medal and a PhD scholarship, Diane opted to change emphasis from political history to mining history. At the time I was editing the two volumes of *Readings in North Queensland Mining History*, enlisting the talents of historians (mostly young

graduates) such as Peter Bell, Jan Wegner, Noreen Kirkman, Ruth Kerr and others who later gave service to the AHMA. Diane accepted the challenge of a history of the North's premier gold city, Charters Towers. With an innovative approach at that time, she combined aerial and colour photographs with oral history and ink sketches of mining technology and practices. She took a course in speed-reading to enable coverage of the many newspapers and printed official sources. I advised her to publish when she was confident of her research findings, which she did, and finally, prior to signing off the Supervisor's Approval form, urged her to index her PhD thesis, which she did. The external examiners remarked upon such diligence.

Meanwhile, I had become friendly with Di's husband John, 19 years her senior, then chef at the local Italian Club where we enjoyed bocce and betting on slow racehorses, for which Diane had little interest. She however was a wonderful hostess, and here I discard chronology for an anecdote.

In 1995, when JCU convened the AHA Peripheral Visions Conference, which encompassed the first meeting of the Australian Mining History Association, Diane was living at Saunders Beach. She offered her sea frontage for a farewell evening party under a marquee. By 7:00pm, well over three score attendees were revelling, with wine and antipasto being plentiful. Suddenly a mighty storm hit. In Northern vernacular: "It pissed down", weight of water collapsing the marquee. Diane was already awaiting the guests under the covered patio with every towel in her linen cupboard. A few minutes later, in softly spoken tone, she pronounced "dinner is ready". John's trays of cannelloni, lasagne, mud crab in alfredo sauce and freshly caught local steamed prawns appeared from the kitchen. She was at her desk by 8:00am next morning, leaving Peter Bell to rescue the wine bottles, and John to clear up the debris.

But back to the 1980s: Diane's PhD conferred, she was offered a temporary

tutorship but decided to look further afield – securing a job in the Canberra public service during which time she became proficient in emerging computer technology. In the late 1980s a vacancy arose for an additional Lecturer in Australian History at JCU. Diane applied as John was “homesick”. It was a formidable field of candidates, and came down to two at the final Selection Committee. Diane was given the nod on the casting vote of the Chair of the Academic Board.

Having succeeded Brian Dalton as Chair I was nominally again her “boss” but soon wondered who really had the whip in hand. Diane was the first woman appointed to a tenured post within the Department of History & Politics against Dalton’s wishes. When she approached me to introduce gender studies I initially balked but conceded a trial after her considerable persuasion. Over the next decade she produced several splendid Honours graduates through her programme.

Diane’s door was always open to students without appointment, even on the most trivial of matters. Long working days were her norm. Rarely did she retire before midnight, the late evening hours given over to research and writing. I often remarked to her: “Thank Christ your energy and commitment is not infectious.” Whereas the less diligent academic scanned an essay or tutorial paper and graded it along with a single sentence comment, Diane spent hours on marking and comprehensive advice. She even wrote appraisals on bloody exam papers, in contrast to contemporary philosophy of “mark and shred, hence no appeal”.

Only towards the end of my university years did I suspect a latent motivation. Diane spent time before academia as a music teacher of piano. Her patience with less talented keyboard-bangers, combined with her desire to encourage a promising virtuoso, tuned her notion of duty. She was an activist for the establishment of the Australian Chamber of Music Festival.

James Cook University, its students of History and sub-streams received more than value for salary from the woman

initially denied provisional enrolment. Her 15 years on tenured staff as a teacher, researcher, and committees and community service toiler, well warranted her rapid promotion to Associate Professor (with strong support from external referees).

In one of the last serious conversations I had with Diane over a decade ago I stressed a priority and proffered advice: “Di, keep the sandbags and razor wire around History & Politics if you can. Although it is too late in your career, notwithstanding your record of achievement, there will be no new Chair. You don’t possess the mongrel streak nor the mendacity to sustain brawls with bureaucrats and peers.” She tried her hardest to sustain the Oral History Programme, the North Queensland Photographic Project, the widely acclaimed Publishing Programme and community involvement with the Australian Institute of International Affairs and a host of town-gown interactions which were mindlessly deemed from above to have no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century university.

Dr Menghetti was warm, generous, self-effacing and humane. Her family was a priority. Her school of History & Politics was her love; her friends were embraced with equal care and affection. *Vale*, Diane Menghetti, a true Troubadour.

*Kett Kennedy*

### **Diane Menghetti, 1940-2012**



*MJD/Sept'12*



# AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 4 December 2012

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### EDITORIAL

Once more, we who were fortunate enough to attend experienced an excellent 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, this time in Waihi, New Zealand. It says much for the progress of our organization that despite the overseas venue, a large contingent of Aussies were among the 80 plus who attended the sessions and who went on to enjoy the spectacular scenic tours around the Coromandel Peninsula. What surprised those who were cognizant of the extent of gold mining in the South Island, was the impact that gold discoveries in the area have had on the economy of New Zealand as a whole. The Waihi Gold Mine currently run by Newmont is a case-in-point, for the large open-cut mine in operation lies on the site of the underground mine established in 1893. It, and recent underground deposits in the adjacent areas were a revelation to the visitors at the conference.

One of the highlights of the conference was the welcome at the Marae by the local Maori hosts who 'challenged' and then welcomed us to their meeting-house where we enjoyed a hangi meal and convivial evening. Recipient of the challenge was our Vice-President Ross Both who bravely stared down the 'warrior' who met us at the portal before the welcome ceremony. A wonderful evening of song, good food, and cementing of relationships with the local Maori

community put us off to a good start. What's more the weather was extremely kind with almost persistent sunshine, as we were told that it can get somewhat damp in the area.

Perhaps the welcome we received (as well as our other New Zealand experience in Greymouth) was one reason why there was an overwhelming vote at the AGM to change our title from 'Australian' to 'Australasian Mining History Association', a move that was welcomed almost (but not entirely) unanimously by those present and those who posted their votes.

Thanks go to the work of the local committee, especially Philip & Sylvia Hart, Jim & Mary Crawford, Doreen Mcleod and Sue Baker Wilson for the effort they put into planning a full and successful week of activities. We are always extremely fortunate to have such industrious and conscientious local committees, and this proved no different in Waihi.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As already noted, one decision taken at the AGM was to change the name of our organization to 'Australasia' so as to embrace other geographic spheres in our locality. This, as with other changes to the constitution that were circulated to all members before the AGM was passed overwhelmingly – the name change was ratified by the Commissioner for Consumer

Protection, Western Australia on 17<sup>th</sup> December. This makes no difference to our functioning but it does recognise our wider geographical field of interests.

Another decision was to change the membership fee categories. Over the years we have seen our membership become top heavy with those who have reached retirement age. This persuaded the meeting to vote to remove the 'unwaged' category. From the beginning of 2013 all members who previously paid the unwaged fee of \$25 will be asked to pay the full membership fee of \$35 – still, the lowest rate for memberships of similar type organisations in either Australia or NZ

(A revised membership form is being prepared. Please don't pay your subs until this is received, or it appears on the web).

Note too, the **new registration form will contain a privacy clause** that will enable those who tick the appropriate box to access other members of the organization and to change their details on the Association's web page. In addition, it's the intention to allow members to renew their memberships on-line through 'Register Now', the portal used to allow people attending the Waihi conference to transfer funds by Credit card (this will also be available for the Beechworth conference in 2013). This should be particularly useful for our international members, as sending foreign cheques, or sending money through an electronic transfer via a bank is getting less and less attractive – indeed charges are tending to become exorbitant. The direct electronic transfer of funds from your to our bank will no longer be available as it has caused too many problems over the last couple of years leading to frustration by both some members and the Treasurer. The changes to the Constitution are now available on the web page.

Yet another decision was to restrict state reps on the 'Advisory Committee' to 2 members per State/Territory and New Zealand, as it was felt that anything larger was too unwieldy. Of course, this doesn't prevent those with ideas to contact their state reps. See the details of these representatives at the end of this newsletter.

## **JOURNAL**

You should now have received your 2012, Volume 10 copy of the journal. Sorry for the delay but gremlins got into the printer's workshop but all was well in the end. A big thanks again to Newcrest Mining Limited for sponsoring the Journal.

NOTE: this is a never-ending process and I'm anxious to receive your articles for Vol. 11, asap. Just one plea: If submitting illustrations, but especially diagrams, do ensure that they are sharp and printable.

Also while footnotes are a must, please don't overdo their use, especially when exactly the same point is referenced in a number of newspaper sources.

*The Ed.*

## **FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES**

**AMHA 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference 29 September – 4 October 2013  
Beechworth, Victoria**

### **Call for Papers**

The 2013 conference will be held in the Memorial Hall, Ford Street, Beechworth. The theme of the conference is *Diversity in Mining*, a theme driven by the diverse range of minerals and mining processes from the hey-day of mining in the modern Shire of Indigo. However, papers covering all aspects of mining history will be welcome.

Presentations should be no longer than 20 to 25 minutes duration, allowing a minimum question time of five minutes for question time. If interested in presenting a paper please include a title and a brief outline (approximately 100 words) accompanied by brief autobiographic details. These should be sent to Nicola Williams at [nicola.williams@monash.edu](mailto:nicola.williams@monash.edu).

All those presenting papers must register for the conference; one-day registrations will be available. See our webpage for Registration forms, sometime in February.

Remember to book your accommodation early. Beechworth has a diverse range of accommodation but you will need to get in early to ensure you have somewhere local to stay. See our web page for an accommodation list, cost per night, facilities, etc.

*Rust, Regeneration and Romance: Iron and Steel Landscapes and Cultures, 10-14 July 2013, Ironbridge, UK*

Some of our members may be interested in the above conference, to be hosted by the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage, University of Birmingham and The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.

For centuries iron and steel have been the fundamental building blocks of modernity. These metals and the technologies, societies and cultures surrounding them have revolutionised the lives of billions of people. From the earliest functional usage of iron in domestic life, to decorative cast iron, from weapons to knives and forks and from the use of high tensile steels in buildings around the world to the stainless steels of space exploration, the transformative power of iron and steel is undeniable. This capacity to transform extends to the landscapes and cultures which have themselves been transformed through the mining, production, processing and consumption of iron and steel. As China and India race to modernise their economies with imported iron and steel, many cities across Europe and North America are still struggling with the decline in production and manufacture. In many parts of Europe former centres of iron and steel production have undergone regeneration and now form part of the tourism economy. Rust has gained currency as part of industrial heritage. Still, in many parts of the developing world, ideas of heritage lie very much in the future, as communities continue to work in the mining of iron ore and the production and fabrication of steel.

This conference seeks to engage in an open multi-disciplinary analysis of iron and steel landscapes and cultures, from the ancient to the modern. The conference will explore the relationships that communities, regions, nations share with iron and steel through its functional use, creative and artistic use and its symbolic use.

The conference welcomes academics from the widest range of disciplines and wishes to act as a forum for exchange

between the sciences, social sciences and the humanities. The conference will draw from anthropology, archaeology, art history, architecture, engineering, ethnology, heritage studies, history, geography, landscape studies, linguistics, metallurgy, museum studies, sociology, tourism studies etc. The conference will take place at the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. If interested see further information on the conference website at: <http://ironandsteel2013.wordpress.com/> Abstracts of 300 words should be sent as soon as possible but no later than 31 January 2013 by those presenting papers, to: [toironbridge@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:toironbridge@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

### **PUBLICATIONS**

*Barry Sykes, Mines, people and Places: settlement of south Gippsland – Korumburra, Jumbunna, Outrim, Barry Sykes, Traralgon, 2012, 895pp, maps, illustrations, bibliography, Price \$90 plus postage, ISBN. Contact Barry at:*

10 Retreat Rd, Traralgon 3844; or [basykes@optusnet.com.au](mailto:basykes@optusnet.com.au)

Some of those present at the Waihi Conference will have already seen and even purchased copies of member, Barry Sykes' tome (for there's no other way of describing this large and well presented publication). It presents an encyclopaedic history of the south Gippsland area, covering all aspects of social and economic activity in the area. Our readers will be interested in particular in the 40% plus of the book that's devoted to mining. A review will appear in the journal, Vol. 11..

### **BITS & PIECES**

#### *Abandoned mines and the flood report*

Have you wondered what happens to all those tailings, acids and other toxic materials associated with mining when hit by a flood? Member, Corrine Unger recently discussed this in relation to the 2012 Queensland floods, where she asked why we don't have a national strategy to set minimum standards for mine rehabilitation. When noted that there are literally hundreds and thousands of abandoned mines around the country then this is a topic well worth serious

consideration. You can hear what Corrine has to say by listening to her report, and by looking at other information at the Centre for Mined Land Rehabilitation (CMLR) newsletter put out by Queensland University at:

<http://www.vision6.com.au/em/message/ema1/view.php?id=949762&u=51093>

### Presentation to David Branagan

The presenting of the Tom Vallance medal was announced in letter No. 69. But below we reproduce a photograph of David just after receiving the medal from prof. Bernie Joyce (in the background). Congrats again to David on his achievements.

*Prof. David Branagan receives the inaugural Tom Vallance medal for services to researching and documenting the history of earth Sciences in Australia. Presentation made at the International Geological Congress, Brisbane*



Thanks the Earth Sciences History Group for permission to use this photo.

### Waihi Conference photos

See the following Link for photos from the AMHA Marae visit in Waihi – see how our Vice-President bravely, without flinching, took up the Maori challenge!

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/gold\\_fm\\_nz/sets/72157631958147971/show/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gold_fm_nz/sets/72157631958147971/show/)

### TICCIH

Folk might be interested to know that Dr Stephen Hughes who specialises in industrial heritage with the RCAM in Wales, and who recently attended the Copperopolis Workshop at Burra, has been

appointed as Secretary of The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH). For those who have no knowledge of TICCIH, it is a body dedicated to the study of industrial archaeology and the protection and interpretation of industrial archaeology. It is pertinent that the committee of the organisation revived the mining section of the organisation at their Congress, which was held in Taipei, Taiwan, in November. Thanks to Iain Stewart for the information.

### Prospecting by the termite method

The ever-alert Peter Bell spotted this one recently, and wishes to share this prospecting certainty with all members of the Association:

“CSIRO entomologists are looking at termite mounds as potential indicators of mineralisation. The technique has a long history of application in Africa, but has not seriously been investigated in Australia. Some species of termite gather fine clay and silt from underground to build their incubation mounds, and in the process sometimes bring soil to the surface from several metres down, below the depths where human prospectors usually focus their efforts. This material can contain traces or "fingerprints" from deeper mineral deposits. Termites sometimes also have minute pellets of metal secreted in their bodies, analogous to human kidney stones. Soil geochemistry has been of interest for some decades - David Branagan described Vladimir Sokoloff's studies in the Moonta area in the 1940s in his 2007 journal article - but the termite technique has the potential to extend the soil zone available for sampling to much greater depth. Current research has already succeeded in identifying gold residues in termite mounds, and is moving on to base metals such as zinc. See the following:

<http://www.csiro.au/Portals/Media/Ant-and-termite-colonies-unearth-gold.aspx>

<http://www.sciencealert.com.au/news/20121212-23914.html>

<http://www.miningaustralia.com.au/features/csiro-using-ants-and-termites-to-uncover-gold>

**Irish Connections**

Carol Moores and Chrissie O'Sullivan are asking for information on Irish miners from their community who may have migrated to Australia. They write:

'We are a small community at the end of the Beara Peninsula in West Cork, Ireland, with a large copper mining history; in fact one of our mines was the largest in Ireland. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century our miners emigrated all over the world to work in new mines and we are now trying to trace their descendants. We would be very happy to establish a working relationship with yourselves and hope to facilitate some of your members in tracing their Irish roots.

Many miners who worked in the Irish mines originally came from Cornwall, so some of your members with Cornish ancestry may also have a connection to Ireland, and might benefit from our research.

We are planning a large mining diaspora resource for people to access online, and we also hope to be opening a mining heritage centre to complement our existing mining museum. We hope to open our largest mine to visitors and we would be very interested to hear from any of your members with experience in similar ventures in Australia.

You may also have heard of An Taoiseach's Gathering Ireland initiative for 2013, when we expect to welcome many descendants of Irish immigrants from all over the world, including, we hope, a good many from Down Under! We hope to hear from some of you. Please contact Carol or Chrissie at:

Allihies Copper Mines Museum, Allihies Beara, Co. Cork, Ireland.  
[chrissie.osullivan@acmm.ie](mailto:chrissie.osullivan@acmm.ie)

### **A Shaggy Dog Story?**

Member Clive Beauchamp sends this doggy excerpt from the pages of the *Australian Town and Country Journal* (NSW) 2 January 1906.

### ***Dogs in Mines***

An Illinois (USA) mines inspector reported that thirty-one dogs (breed not mentioned) were employed at the McDonough County Coal mines in hauling both empty and

loaded cars to and from the mine. The inspector on one visit observed the following incident.

'The driver and his dog returned from the bottom of the shaft drawing an empty car. On arriving at the summit of the hill, the dog alighted and then, without any instruction, leaped into the car again. It rode with the driver down the incline to the level below. Arriving at the bottom the dog jumped out of the car and pulled it up the grade on the opposite side to the working face'.

Clive asks whether any member has previously heard of such 'canine practices' being performed in other mines?

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

We are pleased to announce that the effervescent **Wendy Carter** was recently made a Fellow of the Federation of Australian Societies (FAHS) at the Federation's AGM at Darwin. Wendy was jointly nominated by Royal Western Australian Historical Society, the Historical Society of the Northern Territory and the Royal Historical Society of Queensland for her outstanding contribution to the historical society movement in Australia. Wendy was presented with the award by our own President, Ruth Kerr, who was acting in her capacity as FAHS President.

The only other award announced at the meeting was to another of our members, Dr. **Michael Pearson** who was elected as a fellow for his contribution to heritage and historiography in Australia. His award will be presented later in the year.

### **INFORMATION WANTED**

#### **Coober Pedy Centenary**

Sue Britt of the Coober Pedy Historical Society has informed that 2015 sees the centenary of the opal mining town. As part of the celebration she is hoping to compile an oral history of the town's development and to focus on the unique mining machinery built there. If any of our members has an interest in opal mining and especially on the machinery used on the opal fields could they please contact Sue at: [sue.britt@westnet.com.au](mailto:sue.britt@westnet.com.au)

### **SHORT ARTICLE**

## The Importance and Future of Mining History: an Australian Perspective

Member, Prof. Ken McQueen, provides this thoughtful article on mining that was recently published in *Earth Sciences History*. It's recorded below with permission from the editor of that journal:

'Mining is a pillar of civilisation, providing many of the materials needed for technologies. It has a long history dating back to the first use of surface stone to make simple hand tools. This history even predates the appearance of our own species and is dated to at least 2.6 million years BP when *Homo habilis* developed the earliest Oldowan tools in Africa (McCarthy and Rubidge 2005). Our Stone Age ancestors improved and continued this technology for most of the history of *Homo sapiens*. They also adopted the use of mineral pigments for decoration and art. Following the use of stone, the discovery and utilization of precious metals, particularly gold, as well as copper, lead, tin and iron played a major role in transforming the human condition (Raymond 1984). The production, consumption and coveting of gold shaped and influenced many cultures. In Australia, the gold rushes and gold mining history are a central part of the Australian psyche and national mythology. This is the mining history most familiar to most Australians.

The extraction of metals and other useful elements from the Earth's crust by mining and metallurgical processing is now so well established and widespread that the products of mining are more or less taken for granted and most people have only a vague or incomplete knowledge of the origin of many of these components that make up modern 'everyday' items and technological devices. Due to this knowledge disconnect between source and end product contemporary mining activity is probably not considered of heritage importance or future historical interest by the general public or even those in the mining industry. Despite the best efforts of the industry to indicate otherwise, mining is still widely perceived as a 'dirty and dangerous' industry, and the cause of significant human misery and

environmental degradation. Much of the history of mining in fact underpins this perception. As the human population and related appetite for non-renewable mineral resources continue to increase exponentially there is also a moral dilemma associated with mining, related to concern for the supply of mineral products to future generations and the potential environmental impact of their increased extraction.

Australians have typically had an ambivalent attitude to mining. Mining has provided the nation with much wealth, frequently when other economic activity has been in a precarious state. The discovery of payable gold in 1851 helped transform an initial convict dumping ground and pastoral backwater into a liberated new nation. Gold mining provided the wealth and population to industrialise and modernise the entire country. Since the gold rushes, the Australian public has been fascinated by the numerous mineral booms and busts — benefiting directly and indirectly from the booms and losing national income from the busts (Raggatt 1968; Blainey 1969, 1970). Despite the benefits there has often been concern about the negative effects of mining on aspects of the economy, society and social structures, as well as the environment. Concern for environmental impacts has increased significantly since the 1970s with the rise of the environmental movement. Most recently, unease about societal impacts has returned, for example with the current debate about the detrimental effects on local communities of 'fly in-fly out' mine employment practices. While the current mining boom has helped insulate Australians from the recent global financial crisis, contributing around A\$121 billion *per annum* to the economy (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2012), there is concern about the uneven distributions of the benefits and the problems of a 'two-speed' economy.

During the peak of the environmental movement in the 1980s–1990s many in the community viewed mining at worst as a form of 'rape and pillage' of the land to at best as a necessary evil or dark activity

tolerable if it was in remote, unseen regions. During this period, interest in mining history or any celebration of mining was not widely popular. Extreme attitudes appear to be waning, although there is still an active anti-mining lobby, presently focused on coal and unconventional fossil fuel mining/extraction. There is a growing interest in pre-21<sup>st</sup> century mining history by amateur historians and mining-related professionals driven by an increasing fascination with the narrative or 'story' in mining history, as well as a revival in history in general. There may even be a 're-awakening' in mining history amongst academic historians (Claughton and Mills 2011).

Mining history is closely intertwined with industrial, technological, economic, social and labour histories. In an academic context it has traditionally been considered a sub-discipline of industrial history or archaeology, although recent trends are towards a broader spectrum of topics and fields (Claughton and Mills 2011). As mining is critical to so many aspects of technological, economic and social activity and development and as its past, present and future environmental impacts become of greater concern, mining history would appear fundamental to all these areas of historical enquiry. Mining history in its broadest sense can inform much of history in general.

Mining history is important to the mining industry. Historical records such as plans, assays and reports are essential for establishing the full pre-mining nature of ore deposits and for the re-development of historic mines or even the extension of current mining. Preserved infrastructure such as shafts and other underground openings allow access for sampling or the re-development of a mine. As well as providing practical benefits, maintaining good records and archives at mine sites contributes to the bigger picture of mining history. Historic records can be used to document and understand the best and worst practices in mining, particularly related to engineering and environmental

aspects. Miners can learn much to their benefit from the history of mining.

A key issue for mining history is the ongoing preservation of its multiple information and evidential sources. Mining history is built on a range of records including:

1. archaeological evidence of mining activities and practice preserved at mining sites;
2. portable artefacts such as mining tools, equipment and machinery stored in museums (this could also include rock and mineral collections from particular mines as well as drill core and cuttings);
3. written records such as those compiled and preserved by the miners and mining organisations, as well as contemporary reports in the press;
4. oral records from miners and people associated with or affected by mining activity;
5. pictorial records, including drawings, paintings, photographs and films.

Conserving the physical evidence of past and present mining activities is becoming a significant challenge. Increased awareness and justifiable concern for the natural environment by community and government is leading to stricter legislative requirements to rehabilitate mine sites. This has driven a trend towards total restoration and obliteration of the physical evidence of mining. There are also pressures related to alternative land uses, such as agricultural, forestry, industrial and urban development. These pressures are much greater as mines become larger, for example open-cast coal mines and open-pit metalliferous mines, where the expansive areas of disturbance need to be restored for alternative uses after mining. Most infrastructure from recent mining is commonly removed, particularly the portable components or recyclable materials. Mullock and tailings deposits are required to be stabilised, covered and vegetated to resemble the natural landscape. Shafts and pits are generally infilled or capped. At older historic sites, mine openings and mullock heaps were

commonly left 'as is' on abandonment, with stone, concrete and heavy unsalvageable equipment also left behind, particularly where the mines were in remote areas. However, more recently many of these sites have also undergone rehabilitation by government agencies to ameliorate any environmental or public safety hazards. Preserving mining heritage features at mine sites comes with public liability risk and such features must be rendered as safe as possible with appropriate stabilization, fencing and signage. This can be expensive and it may be much cheaper and more convenient to completely infill or remove all physical evidence of mining.

New mining commonly, and in many cases inevitably, destroys the evidence of earlier mining activities, particularly where old underground mines are re-developed into open-pit operations. The 'Super Pit' at Kalgoorlie, which has taken out the surface infrastructure and most of the historic underground gold workings in the top 360 metres is a prime example. In some cases the juxtaposition of different mining periods presents a fascinating, if confusing, challenge to mining archaeologists. A small example would be the recently restored Gubur Dhaura site in the northern suburbs of Canberra. This site was worked for ochre and clay by aboriginal people, probably from 5,000 years ago and then highly disturbed by nineteenth-century gold prospecting and twentieth-century quarrying for kaolin and road metal.

Many artefacts from historic mining were commonly left on site to decay or to be rescued by local enthusiasts for preservation in collections and museums. There is typically little interest in preserving more modern mining artefacts and equipment, although some mining companies do make donations of their obsolete items to museums. In many cases mine operators may not be fully aware of the historic importance of some of their items of equipment. For example, parts of the first carbon-in-pulp gold extraction plant built in Australia (and one of the first in the world) were still being used at the

revived Mount Boppy gold mine in western NSW until 2006 when the current operator ceased mining (McQueen 2005). The entire plant was to be auctioned for scrap, apparently without knowledge of its significance, before the company was advised of its historical importance.

Modern large scale and mechanised mining methods also mean that fewer mineral and ore specimens are collected and preserved, unlike some of the spectacular collections previously built up by miners working at the face, as well as by avid collectors who had ready access to active mine sites (the Chapman Collection of mineral specimens from Broken Hill is a classic example).

Written and pictorial records can be more easily conserved as long as the will exists to do so. Mining companies recognise the importance of historic records and mine plans to future development or re-development. Despite this, many appear to lack interest in maintaining archival material once their operations have ceased and some may even deliberately destroy records to avoid potential future liability. The cost of safe storage for archival material has been a determining factor in the past, but with digital storage this should not be so significant, although there is still a cost and rapid changes in information technology can result in compatibility problems. The recent trend to corporate 'unbundling' of mining companies (*i.e.* large companies breaking up into smaller companies) also makes it difficult to maintain archival records and corporate knowledge.

The future of mining history will depend largely on the level of interest by historians, the public and the mining industry. The Australian Mining History Association, founded in 1995, is successfully promoting and providing a focus for this interest amongst academic historians and sections of the general community, particularly retiring professionals linked to the mining industry. However, the field lacks 'new blood' (*cf.* Claughton and Mills, 2011). Younger historians need to be encouraged into the

study of mining history, for example by providing them with incentives and support to select mining history topics for their higher degree studies. Geoffrey Blainey, one of Australia's leading scholars and the country's pre-eminent mining historian, chose the history of the Mount Lyell copper mine in Tasmania for his PhD thesis and went on to tell much of the Australian mining story in a series of popular books including *The Peaks of Lyell*, *Mines in the Spinifex*, *The Rush that Never Ended*, *The Rise of Broken Hill* and *The Golden Mile* (Blainey 1954, 1960, 1968, 1969, 1993). Indeed his work has shown how much of Australia's general history can usefully be seen through the prism of its mining history. But there is still much to uncover and interpret.

The mining industry needs to increase its interest and support for mining history and historians need to promote and encourage this interest. Not only is this history of practical use, as outlined above, but also it provides an important public relations link to the general community. The need for greater interest and support for mining history and heritage has been highlighted by the recent demise of the 'Australian Prospectors and Miners Hall of Fame' in Kalgoorlie. Some companies do actively support aspects of mining history and many take steps to preserve heritage items on their leases. However, others consider mining heritage unimportant or even a costly liability if attention is drawn to it. Mining heritage is seen as adding an extra layer of complexity to environmental protection and compliance requirements. Preserving items of mining heritage can also be inconvenient for modern operations and may add expense if projects need to be designed around them. Some sites of extreme environmental devastation have developed into tourist attractions, for example the denuded hills or so called 'moonscape' around the historic Mt Lyell copper mine at Queenstown in Tasmania. Mining companies are keen to distance themselves from such forms of mining heritage and in the process perhaps tend to play down mining heritage in general.

Certainly greater interest by the industry will assist in preserving key physical and documentary evidence. A way to enhance greater understanding and interest by the mining industry would be to include a mining history component in the undergraduate training of future mining professionals, such as mining engineers, metallurgists and geologists.

In a country such as Australia, with active on-going mining it is important to develop the right balance between heritage preservation and environmental management so that there is a good record of this activity for future generations of mining historians and the public. Currently the balance is probably more towards environmental restoration and there is a need to strengthen awareness and the requirements for mining heritage preservation at mine closure. Even with the best intentions and resources to preserve our physical mining heritage modern rehabilitation practice will inevitably result in much less preservation of primary evidence. It is critical therefore to preserve the sites and features that retain the most important information and particularly aspects that cannot be reconstructed from other evidence. Once the sites go, so does the potential for historical and archaeological research. For example, to this end Pearson and McGowan (2009) have recently proposed guidelines for preservation at mining sites, particularly non-listed sites, as part of a survey of abandoned mining sites in New South Wales. Careful and well-informed preservation of physical evidence at mining sites can provide useful community and economic benefits into the future. The growing interest in mining history is driving a rising interest in mining history tourism, which can bring financial benefits to local communities and an appreciation of the positive contribution of mining to society. Tourist mines such as those at Sovereign Hill near Ballarat, the Dalprats and Day Dream mines at Broken Hill and the mining heritage sites at Gympie in Queensland and in the 'Copper Triangle' at

Moonta–Wallaroo–Kadina and at Burra in South Australia are examples.

Mining will remain a fundamental activity for as long as our technologies and life styles require mineral products. Continued supply of these products in an environmentally sustainable way will be a huge challenge demanding exploitation of new and lower grade ores, major technological innovations in exploration, extraction and processing, much more efficient patterns of use and a high level of recycling. The mining history being forged today and in the near future will be of immense interest to the next generation of mining historians.

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### SEASON'S GREETINGS

Our usual **Seasons Greetings** to all our members. If you don't believe in Father Christmas you should – I can vouch for it – many years ago on a visit to Wales with the family we actually met him underground at the 'Big Pit'. If memory serves me correctly he presented the kids with a present and a lump of coal – they were most impressed - a never to be forgotten moment. A couple of weeks ago at the awards night at my granddaughter's Ballet School a very young performer asked me if I was Father Christmas!? She obviously sized up my red nose and grey hair – I had to inform her that while I was old enough I hadn't yet grown a beard, but that I'd put in a good word for her to the real Santa with the proviso that she remained good for the next few days before Christmas. Her mother nodded in approval! Good deed done for the day.



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