



# AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 1 March 2004

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ISSUE 36

### Editorial

Life continues to be busy and interesting. Journal articles for the second volume are being refereed, our mining section of Newcastle conference is looming close, and matters are also amove on the international scene where the International Committee is currently weighing up the merits of applications from Belgium, India and Mexico, to run the 2006 International Mining History Congress. It all adds up to there being a lot of support out there by members and enthusiasts who are keen to contribute the results of their research and interests and to participate in our many ventures. However, that brings me to the point of this editorial – for the last couple of years our membership has been fairly constant at about 180 members (including a few institutions) and it would be nice if we could bring in a few more people into the fold – and I'm sure there are lots out there. So, an appeal to all current members to spread the good word about the organization and what we have to offer in the way of satisfying their thirst for mining related information and activities and to ensure that we continue to attract people with a fresh approach.

### Forthcoming Conferences

#### *AMHA Newcastle 5-9 July 2004*

Run in conjunction with the AHA, this year's mining programme will be shorter than usual as only 11 people responded to the call for papers. John Shoebridge and Ed Tonks have kindly agreed to organize a one-day tour for us, with visits to the Fire Rescue Station and to a working mine, that should prove of interest to anyone who attends. Further details will be given in the next newsletter. In the meanwhile you can register with the AHA at: <http://www.theaha.org.au/>

It would be appreciated if those attending the conference **could inform me** whether they would like to **participate in the tour**, so that John and Ed can start planning the transport requirements.

#### *Mining History Association [USA] Farmington, Missouri 17-20 June 2004*

AMHA member Duane Smith is the programme chair for the annual conference of our sister North American organization and our members wishing to participate are assured of a good welcome. We have had representatives at past conferences, who all speak with enthusiasm about the meetings. This year again, we will be represented (to my knowledge) by Ross Both, Greg Drew

and Brian Hill. Should you require further information you can contact Duane Smith at: [smith\\_d@fortlewis.edu](mailto:smith_d@fortlewis.edu) Web details: [www.mininghistoryassociation.org](http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org)

### ***AMHA Conference Bendigo 2005***

Plans are already well on the way for what looks like another exciting event. The dates chosen are from 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> July, and will follow shortly after the Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences (3rd to 9th July), that's to be held in Sydney. Local organizers Sandra Kippen, Ralph Birrell and James Lerk are planning a full social programme that should appeal to all. There's even a special underground dinner being planned (don't forget to bring your crib!) and a two or three-day post conference tour. So note the dates and keep them free for another AMHA, stand alone extravaganza.

### **Information Wanted**

#### ***Maori Miners***

Philip Hart raises the following question:

'Some Maori were miners in the early Victorian goldfields, but trying to trace their involvement from the New Zealand end is very difficult. If any members of the association have come across sources that shed some light on this, I'd be very grateful to learn about these. Suitable acknowledgment would of course be made'.

Philip can be contacted at: [prhart@mailserv.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:prhart@mailserv.waikato.ac.nz)

#### ***'Syndicates'***

Tasmanian member, Volker Hahl poses an interesting question that arose out of a reading of the 'Cost-book' article in the Journal. He has noted that a local company was organized by a 'syndicate'. This raises a lot of questions as to what is the legal status of such a body? According to the Oxford Dictionary, a syndicate is a 'combination of commercial firms, etc, associated to

forward some interest'. So one question would be, are the syndicate members treated in law and under company organization as individuals or are they reps of various businesses? Is there a distinction between a partnership and a syndicate? Commenting on the question from the centre of the Empire, Roger Burt suggests that that a syndicate is any form of organisation formed to undertake a particular enterprise - it could take the form of a formal or informal partnership, company or cost book company. A partnership, however, is a particular form of organisation, existing in the context of a formal and specific partnership agreement. But this could be wrong - particularly if 'syndicate' in the past took on a particular meaning in Australia.

If anyone can shed light on the subject we would be delighted to hear from you.

### **Congratulations**

Two of our members have recently been awarded doctorates: Betty Cosgrave who was awarded her degree at the University of Queensland, and Glyn Roberts who was presented with his award at the University of Tasmania for his thesis 'The Tasmanian Government and the Metal Mining Industry – an Administrative History: 1880-1914'. Congratulations to both for their achievement and their contribution to mining history.

### **Bits-and Pieces**

#### ***Kalgoorlie/Boulder LoopLine***

Railway enthusiasts will be pleased to know that the demise of the Kalgoorlie-Boulder LoopLine because of the extension of the 'Big-pit' is to be offset with a grant of \$1million by Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines. This will be used to re-align the track so that it once again links the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Township but also, when additional funding is raised, to extend the line to the Mining Hall of Fame. Altogether the line

will have a total length of about 13km. At one time the LoopLine was the busiest in Australia, hauling freight and passengers to serve the townships, mines and woodline companies. For more information on the development and on the use of the 'G233' the oldest steam locomotive still operating in Australia (built in 1898 by James Martin & Co, Gawler, South Australia and now named 'Leschenault Lady') see the web at: [loopline.railway@bigpond.com](mailto:loopline.railway@bigpond.com)

## Publications

Member, Dave Evans', Victorian Mining Accident Index is now available on CD, it is set up using Netscape navigator and has over 7500 names. It is sorted by name and district and includes 24 photographs of headstones or mines. It is available for \$20.00 plus \$5.00 registered postage. Contact address: Dave Evans, 439 Main Rd. Ballarat 3350 Victoria.  
Tel. (03) 53325806

Also from Victoria, details have been received on a new book on labour history: P.D. Gardner, *A Gippsland Union the Victorian Coal Miners Association 1893-1915*, Ngarak Press, Ensay, Vic., 2003. paper back, 178p, B & W photos, map, index.

Copies can be obtained from Ngarak Press, PO Box 18 Ensay, Vic. 3895 at a cost of \$32 (includes postage). Contact 03-51594354, or A/H 03-51573228, or e.mail: [ngarak@Bigpond.com](mailto:ngarak@Bigpond.com)

The release notice states: "The book is about the miners union from its earliest inception to its joining Australian Coal and Shale Employees federation in 1915. It covers the booming coal mining period of the towns of Outrim, Jumbunna and Korumburra and the early period of the State Coal Mine at Wonthaggi. Of particular interest is the great strike or lock-out of 1903/4 ... the stoppage being

for a duration of over 70 weeks." The index lists over 500 names of miners

## New Organisation

It has just been drawn to our attention that a body has recently been formed bearing the acronym ASHET. This stands for Australian Society for History of Engineering and Technology. As some of our members have an interest in this area, they might like to check out the details on the web at <http://www.aset.org.au/> or contact Secretary Ian Arthur at [ianarthur@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ianarthur@ozemail.com.au)

## Rescuing Historical Mining Records

Some time ago, in response to a notice in the newsletter, members acted by sending letters to save the Noel Butlin Business Archive at the Australian National University. Another appeal has recently been received from WA's Battye Library asking for letters of support for the raising of finance to save archival material that is under threat from deterioration. As many of our members will have utilised the Battye when researching mining history topics, and many will no doubt use the facilities in the future, we call on you to again become active by showing the authorities that we are concerned to see everything possible done to preserve valuable and irreplaceable materials that give us an insight into the past and which are vital for purposes of research. Records such as newspapers that have becoming brittle with age; documents and films, including microfilm that are being adversely affected, photographs that need to be preserved, mining maps, that could fall to pieces, etc. The more support received from interstate and abroad, the greater the likelihood that the money will be forthcoming for this worthy cause. The appeal is reproduced below and we urge your early support. So it would be much appreciated if you could spend about 10

minutes to fill out the web questionnaire at

<http://www.success-works.com.au>

### **Appeal**

The JS Battye Library of West Australian History (part of the State Library of WA) collects, preserves and makes available to the community material on Western Australia's heritage. These priceless historical records include books, newspapers, photographs, private papers, films and oral histories, some dating from before white settlement.

Despite the dedicated effort of expert staff, rates of deterioration of certain materials are proving beyond current resources to rectify. The risk is that parts of the collections will be lost if action is not taken. Dr Ronda Jamieson, Director of the Battye Library, has noted that we are not alone:

*'This is a worldwide problem because collections are deteriorating faster than staff can do the preservation work'.*

In other countries private sources are being used to supplement government funds to accelerate preservation programmes and in WA special funding is also required to help save the most endangered materials. Ronda added:

*'The good news is that if immediate action is taken much of the material can be saved and made available on line through the internet'.*

### **Action So Far**

In response to this need a Consortium has been set up consisting of representatives of community groups that use and value Battye Library resources, including academic and professional historians, teachers, mining and business industries, ethnic and indigenous peoples, family historians and those with a general interest in Western Australian history. The aim of the Historical Records Rescue Consortium (HRRC) is to seek the funding to rescue precious material held

in the JS Battye Library in the interests of current and future generations.

*'The consortium came together in 2003 because we knew that if we didn't get support and act quickly it all might be too late'* said Dr Pamela Statham Drew, President of HRRC. Discussions are already underway with Lotterywest, (which has previously supported smaller preservation projects) and other potential project partners. Lotterywest has provided funds for a consultant to help the HRRC determine community priorities in this important project, find other project partners and apply for a further grant.

### **Why Help is needed**

So much needs preserving and fund raising efforts will only go so far in meeting urgent and on-going needs. The Consortium needs community help to prioritise and support the need to restore the most at-risk material. In other words the first of the at-risk material to be saved must be the most in-demand. The community needs to say what this is.

### **How**

Comments and support from as many people as possible are needed before the end of April as the Consortium intends submitting a proposal for special funding to Lotterywest for consideration. All interested are invited to check out the site and to answer the questionnaire set out on the HRRC website

<http://www.success-works.com.au>

Groups may request a speaker for more information during March and early April on the same number.

### **To Contact the HRRC**

Tel: 1800 675 421 between 8am and 3pm Perth time or A/H 0409-290895.

Write to us c/o Friends of Battye,  
PO Box 216 Northbridge WA 6865.

MJD/March'04



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**ISSUE 37**

### Editorial

It's pleasing to note that interest in mining history seems to be growing. Recent International Congresses and reports of large attendances at annual country-based meetings around the world, the 2003 successful International Congress held in Akabira, Japan and the show of interest by India to run a future international meeting, indicates that international contact is growing apace, thus promising much more in the way of cross-fertilisation of ideas and exposure to new mining cultures. Closely allied is the growing interest and concern with mining heritage, something that we find is of equal concern in Asia as it is in areas of the mining world of which we have greater knowledge. There is often a conflict between preservation and the need for safety and/or re-development of sites. While we can today look back at the contribution of mining to the economy and wider society and see value in the preservation of older plant and buildings already on heritage lists, the worry is that the tendency for instant rehabilitation of sites of recent vintage (as worthy as that is) will leave mining history enthusiasts of the future with no trace of mining

heritage. Today's activity is tomorrow's history and while common sense tells us that we can't preserve everything, it is worth pressuring authorities to at least leave enough evidence to ensure future generations can ponder and contemplate on what has happened in the past. These musings were brought on by the concern expressed in Japan over some magnificent and unusual mining sites that are under threat, but also by the invitation to member Chris Carter to speak to the directors of Mitsubishi who were concerned to learn what preservation measures were being taken in Australia and other parts of the world. This, so that they can put into practice, the preservation of their own heritage. When large companies show interest, it appears to be a positive step and perhaps a lever to persuade other companies and authorities of the need to continue to preserve at least some remnants of present day mining developments. Perhaps one of the goals of the Association should be to identify significant modern sites and bring these to the attention of business and authorities to ensure enough evidence is left for future interpretation?

## Forthcoming Conferences

### *Pit Women and Others: Women miners in Asia Pacific countries, 2 July 2004, Old Canberra House, ANU, Canberra*

Organized by AMHA member and Dr Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Research Fellow, at the ANU, this one day workshop will investigate the vital role that women have played in the mining industry in the Asia Pacific region drawing attention to gender in labour questions in the Asian and Pacific mining sphere. It puts together an interdisciplinary group of experts to deliberate upon the various productive roles that women play (and have played) in the industry.

The fact that women take part in non-traditional occupations like mining challenges the common stereotypes and representatives of 'Asian Women' as described in western feminist academic circles. It also allows examination of which work areas and in what mining practices women are still active.

Women miners in Asia were discussed at the Women in Asia Conference in 1993 which concluded on the note that: *Much more needs to be done, both to recover the history of women and men mine workers in Asia as well as on women mine workers in other regions in order to locate them in the context of a gendered mining history. Only then can the currently prevailing masculinist model be redressed and rather more complex questions about the particularities of Asian women mineworkers begin to be addressed.*

The workshop will follow up on those observations to deliberate on past and present roles and status of women miners in Asia. The relevance of the workshop lies in re-evaluating the emphasis of academic research upon the inferior position of women in patriarchal Asian societies, leaving aside questions of gender and power relations in specific contexts of productive work. The

significance also arises out of the panel's intention to engage with policy makers and civil society representatives.

The proposed panelists are as follows:

**Dr. Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt** – Panel organizer and main contact (Human Geography) RMAP, ANU, paper on Indian women coal miners

**Dr Kathy Robinson** – (Anthropology) RSPAS, ANU: Chairperson

**Dr. Sachiko Sone** – (History) UWA, paper on Japanese women coal miners

**Dr. Christine Boulan-Smit** – Consultant Anthropologist, RMAP, ANU, paper on Women miners in Kalimantan

**Dr. Amajit Kaur** – (Economic History) UNE, paper on Tin mining and women miners in Malaya 1880-1940.

**Ms. Ingrid McDonald** – CAA, Oxford, paper on Rights of women in mines in Asia

**Dr Donald Smith** – Historian, Tokyo, Japan, paper on Korean women in prewar Japanese coal mining

**Dr Martha MacIntyre** – Anthropologist and Consultant, paper on women miners in Lihir Mine, Papua New Guinea.

**Dr Gill Burke** – Social historian, Consultant, paper on Overview on women miners of Asia.

**Mr Geoff Crispin** - Consultant, paper on women in artisanal and small mines in Papua New Guinea.

For registration details (free registration), contact:

Dr Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt, Research Fellow, Resource Management in Asia Pacific Program, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University, ACT 0200.

e.mail: [kuntala@coombs.anu.edu.au](mailto:kuntala@coombs.anu.edu.au)

### *AMHA Newcastle 5-9 July 2004*

Details of the papers to be presented at Newcastle can be seen at the back of the newsletter. The final tally is 12 papers. John Shoebridge and Ed Tonks will be running a one-day tour on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> July. This involves a visit to a working

mine and also to the Mines Rescue Station. **Pre-booking is essential**, so if you intend to participate in the tour and haven't already informed me, please do so **by 20 June** at the latest.

For further information and to register see the AHA web page at: <http://www.theaha.org.au/>

***EUREKA 150 - Releasing the Spirit of Democracy, University of Ballarat, 25-27 November, 2004***

As part of the celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade, the University of Ballarat is organising a conference to explore the democratic impact of the goldfields protest movement in Victoria in 1854, the contribution of the Eureka Stockade and its flag to democratic movements, and the state of democracy today.

The organising committee will be inviting keynote speakers to give national and international perspectives on the health of democracy in today's world. The committee also invites proposals for papers that examine five aspects of the conference:

- a) Setting the Scene: Democratic movements in the 1850s - in Ballarat, other goldfields, and in urban areas. - especially examining the beginnings of responsible government in the Australian colonies.
- b) From Eureka to Federation; the impact of the Eureka Stockade on the style and temper of government in Australia, and its impact on later democratic movements.
- c) The moulding of Australian identity, considering the use of the Eureka flag, literary and artistic responses, political and social movements, celebrations and monuments.
- d) A consideration of those excluded from the democratic process - Aboriginal people and the Chinese in the nineteenth century, refugees etc.

e) E-democracy. Current and future trends of using technology to increase participation in government.

Please submit proposals not exceeding 250 words by 30 June 2004. to:

Dr. Anne Beggs Sunter, Eureka 150 Conference sub-committee, School of Behavioural and Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Ballarat, PO Box 663, Ballarat, Vic. 3353.  
Email: [a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au)

***AMHA Conference Bendigo 2005***

11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> July

Note this in your diary. The organizing committee are well forward in their planning and the conference promises to be among our best!

***2006 International Mining History Congress***

The scene has been set for the next International meeting. This will be held in the Flemish region of Belgium, in the coal mining area centred at Limburg (82km from Brussels, 77km from Antwerp and 50km from Liege). Dates are still to be finalized but will probably be determined for the first half of September 2006.

The conference sessions will be held in old coalmine buildings at Beringen (now a cultural centre) and at Limburg University Campus, Diepenbeek. The usual tours and social functions will be there to entertain the participants and accompanying persons, and there is a plentiful supply of accommodation in the area, at reasonable prices. Expect updates in future newsletters.

***2008 International Mining History Congress, India***

Save up your rupees, and if this turns out as well as our first venture into Asia, when we visited Japan, then it will be well worth the effort. India has an ancient as well as a modern tradition in mining, and the prospect of viewing this first hand is exciting. More info at a later date.

## **Bits-and Pieces**

### *Lucky Strike!*

Smiling from the pages of the West Australian on 4 May were three lucky prospectors, Dan, Ian and Mike (no surnames) showing the 7.2kg gold nugget they had found, For those interested in checking out the area, it has been described as lying 'somewhere north of Kalgoorlie'! Called the Golden Stonefish and with an estimated gold content value of \$140,000, the nugget will be on display at the Perth Mint until a buyer is found. Three weeks earlier and it could have joined all the other nuggets on display at the multi-million Rothschild's Exhibition.

## **Information Wanted**

### *South Australian Asbestos*

Eric Whalley is seeking any information on his grandfather, David T. Whalley who migrated to Australia in the early 1900s. He has been informed that his grandfather had something to do with the discovery of asbestos in South Australia and would like to verify and obtain details on this discovery. David T is buried in Adelaide and on his headstone there appear the letters FRS, but to which Royal Society he was a fellow of is not known. If you can shed a light on any of the above, please contact David at [Eric.Whalley@biogenidec.com](mailto:Eric.Whalley@biogenidec.com)

## **Opinions Wanted - Bendigo Tour 2005**

The organizing committee would like to canvas opinion on the Conference tour from those who intend to be at Bendigo. The alternatives are either a half to one-day tour in the vicinity of Bendigo; a two day tour to several goldfields around Bendigo in Central Victoria that returns to Bendigo or finishes in Melbourne; or a more extensive three day tour to Maldon, Maryborough, Talbot, Clunes, Daylesford and Castlemaine, finishing in Melbourne (Cost of the latter estimated at approx.

\$275). If intending to be at the conference it would help greatly in the decision making if you would let me know by e.mail, a telephone call, or by snail mail, which of the following you would support (also indicate number of accompanying persons):

- 1) the three day tour
- 2) the two day tour
- 3) the one day tour

## **Journal**

Bar last minute hitches, the second volume of the *Journal of Australasian Mining History* will be published in September. As editor, I'd like to appeal for papers for the third volume, these to be forwarded to me for consideration, as soon as possible.

While the main focus of the journal is on Australian and New Zealand, those articles that relate to general mining history that cross international boundaries are also welcome. As a reminder, the journal is in two sections:

- a) a refereed section where papers will be rigorously examined by two referees.
- b) a non-refereed section where articles may be edited but not refereed.

For instructions on the setting out of papers, contact me, or see the web page at [http://www.econs.ecel.uwa.edu.au/AMHA/amha\\_main.htm](http://www.econs.ecel.uwa.edu.au/AMHA/amha_main.htm)

## **Annual General Meeting**

The agenda for the Annual General Meeting to be held at the Promenade Room, Civic Theatre, Newcastle, on Monday 5 July, is attached. If anyone would like to nominate or re-nominate for the committee and cannot attend, please send in the nomination to the Secretary in writing. Nominations may also be made from the floor. Any motions, or suggested changes to the constitution should also be forwarded.

MJD/June'04

**Newcastle Conference**  
**Mining History**  
**Timetable**  
**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July**

**9.00 – 10.30 (Chair – Pat Bertola)**

**Jim Enever and Rod Doyle** - *The 'Thick and Thin' of Australian coal mining*

**Peter Bell** - *The Mine that was Too Safe: the Mount Mulligan Coal Mine Disaster of 1921*

**Criena Fitzgerald** - *The 1925 Miners Phthisis Act in Western Australia: Translating medical understanding into public policy*

**11.00 - 12.30 (Chair: Mel Davies)**

**Philip Hart** - *Mining and Pollution: Te Aroha [New Zealand] 1880-1980*

**Barry McGowan** - *Lasseter's Reef: myth, legend and Frederick Blakely*

**Gerard MacGill** - *The Art of Mining*

**3.30 – 5.00 (Chair: Peter Bell)**

**Pam Sharpe** - *Envisioning Heritage in the Western Australian Goldfields: Gwalia's Museum and Precinct*

**Patrick Bertola** - *Mapping Gwalia*

**Criena Fitzgerald** - *Mining the Gwalia experience: An oral history of a mining town*

**5.30 – 7.30 (Chair: Barry McGowan)**

**Ruth Kerr, OAM** - *Women Associated with mine managers on the mining fields*

**Richard G. Hartley** - *Ten landmark inventions in non-ferrous ore size reduction and mechanical concentration since 1850*

**Mel Davies** – *Taking coals from Newcastle: Smelting location and fuel costs at Kooringa, South Australia*

**Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt and David Williams** - *The Coal Cycle: A small part of the illegal coal supply in eastern India*

.....  
**The Coal Cycle!**



# Newcastle Conference

## Time Table and Abstracts

### **Peter Bell**

*The Mine that was Too Safe: the Mount Mulligan Coal Mine Disaster of 1921*

In September 1921 the Chillagoe Company's coal mine at the remote North Queensland township of Mount Mulligan was devastated by a coal dust explosion, killing the entire underground workforce of 76. The death toll made it the third-worst industrial accident in Australian history. Ironically, the disaster was caused by work practices which had evolved in the knowledge that the mine atmosphere was free from methane, which was believed to be the cause of all coal mine explosions. The explosibility of finely-divided coal dust was only dimly understood in Australia at the time, despite the experimental findings on its behaviour that had been published in Europe and the USA for nearly ten years. This paper looks at the social, political and economic impacts of the Mount Mulligan disaster, and the role it played in the evolution of Australian mine safety regulations.

### **Patrick Bertola**

*Mapping Gwalia*

Gwalia was a relatively small and spatially discrete settlement lying about 130 miles to the north of Kalgoorlie and almost at the terminus of the rail link that linked Kalgoorlie and Leonora. While the external boundaries of the town are well remembered, particularly in a broader sense of being quite separate from Leonora, the physical layout of the town, and its social and property structure are not so well defined.

This paper is very much a report on work in progress. It relates something of the background to the general research project and how knowledge of the structure of the population at various times and its location within the town might help advance historical understanding, not only of Gwalia but also of migrant communities in isolated mining settlements. The paper will also consider material gathered to date, principally that from rates books of the Roads Boards and Shire councils that controlled the area.

### **Mel Davies**

*Taking coals from Newcastle - smelting location and fuel costs at the English & Australian Copper Company, Kooringa, South Australia*

Because it takes more than one ton of coal to smelt a similar quantity of minerals, and because coal is weight for weight less valuable than the mineral, it makes good logistical and economic sense to transport the mineral to the coal rather than *vice versa*. Yet in the 19th century at the Burra Burra mines, common sense appears to have been turned on its head. Not only was the smelter erected by the Patent Copper Company (later called the English & Australian Copper Company) located in South Australia, where at the time there were no proven coal deposits, but it was situated at Kooringa 100 miles inland from the main Port of Adelaide, and adjacent to the Burra Burra mines, thus making the decision seemingly even more illogical from an economic point of view. The paper sets out to examine the reasoning behind the decision to locate at the site.

### **Jim Enever and Rod Doyle**

*The 'Thick and Thin' of Australian coal mining*

During the second half of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the demands for black coal grew dramatically in a rapidly industrialising Australia. From 1880 to 1930, the Northern Districts of NSW produced the lion's share, an increasing proportion being produced from the Gretna Seam, which accounted for approximately 50 per cent of total NSW production by the late 1920s. During

these years, 25 collieries were established in the triangle between Maitland, Branxton and Cessnock to exploit the seam.

To gain independence of supply from NSW, Victoria attempted to exploit its relatively meagre indigenous resources of black coal along the South Gippsland coast from the 1850s but by the 1880s serious attempts at a 'home grown' coal industry were put on hold. Industrial problems in the NSW coal industry, coupled with the discovery of new outcrops further inland in Gippsland, prompted a more vigorous attempt at a black coal industry from 1890, with private development of these discoveries culminating in 'relative self sufficiency' from 1896 to 1902. Failure of these activities after 1903, together with increasing industrial unrest in NSW, led to the eventual setting up of the Victorian State Coal Mines on the Powlett River Coalfield in 1909. From 1910 to 1930, local black coal production in Victoria increased from around 40 per cent to around 60 per cent of coal imported into Victoria from NSW, reflecting a determination to maintain a degree of leverage over NSW supplies. Almost all of Victorian production in this period came from the State Coal Mines. From the late 1920s on, however, brown coal production in Victoria increased quite dramatically, quickly supplanting black coal as the State's major energy source and ensuring the desired independence.

The statistics suggest inevitable competition between mining operations in the Greta Seam and on the Powlett River Coalfield. A by-product of this history was the development of distinctly different mining practices to cope with the widely diverse geological conditions prevailing in the two areas. The relatively thick and continuous Greta Seam on the one hand, and the contrasting often thin to very thin and discontinuous seams of South Gippsland on the other, led to the evolution of innovative approaches to extracting coal from seams that departed from the generally accepted optimum of around two metres thickness.

The paper outlines the respective histories of the development of tailored mining practices for both areas, discusses attendant problems and compares productivity and recovery statistics.

### **Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt and David Williams**

#### *The Coal Cycle: A small part of the illegal coal supply in eastern India*

Illegal mining is a common feature around coal deposits in India. A characteristic of the coalfields area is the sight of bicycles carrying sacks of coal, the bike being used as an inanimate packhorse with men pushing them along the roads connecting the mines with neighbouring towns. This is just one part of an extensive illegal coal supply network involving millions of tonnes annually. These coal cycles deliver coal or coke to small consumers such as domestic houses, shops, particularly food stalls, and local brickfields.

We ask who are these coal cycle wallahs, how do they make their way across the coalfields, how much coal do they carry, and where does the coal come from? Our objective here is to provide an estimate of one part of the 'black' (or illegal) coal economy in one part of the coal-producing tracts of India by describing the nature and extent of the supply of coal (or coke) by the bicycles.

### **Criena Fitzgerald**

#### *The 1925 Miners Phthisis Act in Western Australia: Translating medical understanding into public policy*

Western Australian gold miners were the subjects of more Royal Commissions into their health than miners in any other State. The first Royal Commission in 1905 identified tuberculosis as the main cause of ill-health underground and public health physicians advocated medical examination for tuberculosis to prohibit the 'dangerous miner' from underground. Miners, however focused on their occupation as the main cause of their ill-health and wanted improved working conditions, better dust control and compensation rather than exclusion from work.

In the Western Australian goldfields medical diagnosis and separation of silicosis (a dust caused lung disease) from tuberculosis (a germ caused infectious respiratory condition) was almost impossible. The clinical response of most general practitioners was to label all miners' disease as miners' phthisis and advise their patients to leave the mine. In theory, miners' unions supported the

exclusion of men with tuberculosis from the mines, but they were not prepared to endorse the practice without the provision of compensation for the men and their families.

The problem of tuberculosis underground was thus not addressed until the Miners' Phthisis Act of 1925 and only when the Commonwealth Government offered a Laboratory to assist in the examination of miners. The government wanted the removal of men with tuberculosis from underground because of the susceptibility of miners with silicosis to the disease, and because the conditions underground facilitated tuberculosis infection. It was important for the State that the 'health' of the mining industry be facilitated, and this meant having a healthy workforce. Tuberculosis in the mines therefore, became addressed as an occupational, rather than a public health disease and the public health consequences of tuberculosis diminished before the competing interests of the mine owners, miners and government.

### **Criena Fitzgerald**

*Mining the Gwalia experience: An oral history of a mining town*

One way of capturing the essence of living and working in Gwalia was to interview the men, women and children who lived and worked there. The back to Gwalia Association was established in 1945 and people from the region have returned annually to share their experiences, meet friends and reminisce. A questionnaire was sent to members of the association, and from this we have been conducting interviews with people who lived in Gwalia or Leonora from 1918 until the closure of the mine in 1963. This is a work in progress and so far we have collected over fifty hours of tape with people who remember their experience in Gwalia as miners, mine workers, cooks, prospectors, schoolchildren, publicans, store-owners, station-owners, policemen, wives and mothers. The Sons of Gwalia mine was the main employer in the town and its success as a goldmine effected everyone's life. In this presentation I will give a flavour of life in an isolated Eastern Goldfields mining town in Western Australia during the first half of last century.

### **Philip Hart**

*Mining and Pollution: Te Aroha [New Zealand] 1880-1980*

This paper considers changing public attitudes to the environmental impacts of mining. Locals who supported mining because of anticipated economic rewards for the district downplayed potential pollution while the Mines Department encouraged mining for the benefit of the country and considered environmental fears to be exaggerated. In the twentieth century, local bodies required to clean up the mess left by others, at first sought stringent controls but with minimal success. Because of its location on a steep hillside near a township and large farming district, protection of clean water was of concern from 1880 onwards. The Norpac mine, operating between 1968 and 1973, despite prior assurances, produced toxic waste that polluted streams and created a tailings dam high on the mountainside that remains as a source of continued concern to the township and is a 'horrible example' that faces environmentalists and official bodies. The consequences of this abuse by the mining company included tightening of procedures, the requirement of bonds and rehabilitation, and a general public resistance to mining that led to mining being banned on the whole of the Coromandel Peninsula. (It will be illustrated by slides and OHPs to make the issues more understandable).

### **Richard G. Hartley**

*Ten landmark inventions in non-ferrous ore size reduction and mechanical concentration since 1850*

The historical backgrounds and significance of ten of the most important inventions that have been made since 1850 in non-ferrous ore processing are detailed in this paper. In size reduction machinery, three inventions stand out, the Californian stamp mill, the Washoe grinding pan and the tube mill. Two inventions in mechanical concentration probably would be on most historians' lists, the Frue vanner and the Wilfley table, to which have been added three Australian inventions, the Hancock jig, the vacuum filter and the Reichert cone concentrator. Magnetic and electrostatic separation make up the ten. The object of the paper is to stimulate further debate on the processes of invention and technological transfer in the mining industry,

**Ruth Kerr, OAM**

*Women Associated with mine managers on the mining fields*

Significant relationships formed between the few women who ventured onto the mining fields in association with mine and mill managers. They lived in the finest houses on the fields and organised and participated in the key social and cultural activities in the towns. A special relationship formed between a mine manager, Peter Moffat, who passed through Newcastle in 1884, and a Scottish woman, Jane Vary, who'd lived in Brisbane, Stanthorpe, Tenterfield and Irvinebank in north Queensland. The development and outcome of the relationship illustrated the precarious nature of society in the remote mining towns of Australia in the late nineteenth century.

**Gerard MacGill**

*The Art of Mining*

Mining has been the inspiration for much art, but miners have rarely taken up the brush to express their emotions and to record their way of life. This illustrated talk takes examples of miners artwork from England, Japan and elsewhere, revealing aspects of mining and community life captured with a power of depiction far beyond that of print and photography.

**Barry McGowan**

*Lasseter's Reef: myth, legend and Frederick Blakely*

The story of the 1930-31 Lasseter's Reef expedition is one of Australia's enduring mysteries, which over the years has progressed almost to the realm of legend. Lasseter and his reef have been immortalised by countless books and journal stories, a Casino and a highway. Numerous expeditions have been mounted in search of this elusive El Dorado. All have failed. Both Lasseter and the expedition are still shrouded in contradictions and controversy, for the expedition was plagued with physical and temperamental difficulties of an extraordinary nature. An undercurrent of dissension and distrust were ever present, which appears to have endured to the present day.

My interest in the story is recent. I was one of a six-member party which erected a memorial cairn in 2003 to Frederick Blakeley, who was the leader of the 1930-31 expedition. The cairn was erected not far from Haasts Bluff, west of Alice Springs, where Blakeley's ashes were scattered many years earlier. My interest in Blakely was aroused by the reading of his two books, one of which was on the 1930-31 expedition. It was further stimulated by a remarkable series of events in which hitherto unknown aspects of his life were brought to the fore. My paper seeks to reinstate Blakely from the undeserved historical obscurity into which he has fallen, and address some important questions concerning the 1930-31 expedition.

**Pam Sharpe**

*Envisioning Heritage in the Western Australian Goldfields: Gwalia's Museum and Precinct*

A team from UWA and Curtin Universities (Bertola, Sharpe, Fitzgerald, Fox) began to research the history of Gwalia in the Western Australian Goldfields during 2003 with a small scale oral history project. We are fortunate that Gwalia has a small museum and a restored 'Precinct' area. When the first Sons of Gwalia mine closed just before Christmas in 1963, there were immediate attempts to maintain some of the infrastructure. As a result, Gwalia did not disappear or become a ghost town in the same way that has happened to many other towns with closed mines across the Goldfields. The vision of Gwalia to date will be described in this illustrated presentation. Effectively, I will consider the history of public history at this miner's camp.

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**AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION INC.**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**To be held at the Promenade Room, Civic Theatre, Newcastle  
Monday 5 July 2004  
at 6.15pm**

**AGENDA**

**President's Report and observations**

- 1. Minutes of AGM 5 July 2003**
- 2. Matters Arising from Minutes**
- 3. Treasurer's Report/Auditor's Report year ending 31 December 2003**  
Statement of Income and Expenditure 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30 June 2004
- 4. Correspondence**
- 5. Election or Confirmation of Officers**  
a) Patron; b) President; c) Secretary; d) Treasurer; e) Auditor; f) Committee (not less than seven additional members) #
- 6. Motions and Changes to Constitution**
- 7. Setting of Fees for 2004**
- 8. General Business** (items may be raised from the floor)
  - a) Report on venue and date for 2005 Conference
  - b) Call for venue for 2006 Conference

**# Current Executive Committee members are:**

Patron                    Prof. Geoffrey Blainey, AC  
President                Dr. Peter Bell (SA)  
Secretary/Treasurer   Mr. Mel Davies (WA)

**Current Committee members are:**

ACT   Mr. Chris Carter, Dr. Barry McGowan.  
SA.   Dr Ross Both, Mr. Greg Drew  
NSW   Dr. Graydon Henning, Mr. Ross Mainwaring.  
NT   Prof. David Carment AM  
Qld   Dr. Ruth Kerr OAM, Dr. Jan Wegner, Dr. Diane Menghetti .  
Vic   Mr. David White, Ms. Sandra Kippen.  
WA   Dr. Patrick Bertola, Ms. Wendy Carter, Dr, Charlie Fox, Dr.Sachiko Sone.  
TAS   Mr. Greg Dickens, Dr. Glyn Roberts.  
NZ   Dr. Brian Hill, Dr. Philip Hart.



# AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 3 SEPTEMBER 2004

Patron: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC

ABN 96 220 329 754

Web page: <http://www.econs.ecel.uwa.edu.au/AMHA/amhamain.htm>

**ISSUE 38**

### Editorial

Just some observations on the Newcastle meeting that was held in conjunction with the Australian Historical Association's National conference. While concentrated into one day, all those attending the proceedings were more than happy with the quality of the presentations and the variety of topics – thus, something for everyone. Papers ranged from coal to copper and gold, to smelting, technology, mining personalities and their love lives, mining art and disasters and lost gold reefs. All those who attended the latter presentation by Barry McGowan were, however, disappointed, when instead of the expected revelation of the location of Lasseter's fabulous reef, Barry proceeded to destroy the 'finder's' credibility, and all our illusions suddenly fell to dust. Perhaps the most entertaining paper of the proceedings was that presented by Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt and David Williams, who gave an illustrated talk on the illegal 'black' coal economy in India and the activities of the 'cycle wallahs'. Perhaps this is an indication that the 2008 International Conference to be held in India should be a 'must' on the Conference Calendar. One of the benefits of attending a mixed conference was again borne out when we were visited by a large number of people from other sections of the history fraternity, a reminder, as later brought up in the AGM, that

we should not cut ourselves off completely from the wider history discipline. Indeed, we managed to get a couple of recruits from the ranks, which is just one of the benefits. So while it might be attractive to consider going it alone occasionally, it would seem to be against our best interests to divorce ourselves completely from the wider community.

The conference tour organized by John Shoebridge and Ed Tonks was greatly appreciated by the half-dozen or so who attended. The highlight was a visit to the Myuna Coal Mine where members were driven 5km through underground galleries to see one of the mechanical borers drill out the coalface. As most of the workings lie directly under Lake MacQuarie, it came as no surprise to learn that they pumped out some 10million gallons of water a day, and members were all reminded of this when sloshing knee deep in the slush that gathered in the depressions.

Altogether, another very successful, sociable and enjoyable occasion.

## Annual General Meeting

There was a fair attendance at the AGM despite various shifts of venue that had some members confused. All proceeded smoothly and there were no issues of dispute. The President pointed out that we had reached a milestone in that this was our tenth Annual General Meeting. We had settled into a pattern whereby we ran successful annual conferences and in the last 12 months had achieved a major goal when producing the Journal. He believed that for an organization of our size and nature we had progressed remarkably well. We had, however, to sustain the effort and to try to progress.

One matter considered again was how we should run future conferences – whether we should go it alone or continue to work along with other organizations such as the AHA. After much discussion it was agreed that while there were great benefits in going alone, there were also some drawbacks, especially that of finding organizers for our major events. There were also advantages in associating with other organizations, especially that of publicising our presence widely, in terms of the cross-fertilisation that went on, and in the fact that on these occasions we inevitably picked up new members. Greg Drew sent in a list of possible mining related venues in South Australia that he believed would make suitable venues for future conferences. It was agreed that members of the committee should be asked to draw up similar lists for future reference.

A report was received from Sandra Kippen as to the progress with the Bendigo Conference that will be held in July 2005. Arrangements for venues and activities were progressing well and from the number of comments made to people present and to the Secretary, it appeared that we would get a large turnout of participants.

While we were holding a 'stand alone' conference at Bendigo in 2005, it was agreed that only holding such meetings every other year was not sacrosanct. It was thus agreed that we would accept the kind offer made by

Graham Hancock of the Moonta-Wallaroo Corporation to hold the 2006 conference on the Yorke Peninsula.

It was also moved that we ask for anyone prepared to organize a conference in 2007 to come forward. If there were no offers, we would resort to our past practice of alternating with other organizations.

The Treasurer reported that we were in a quite healthy financial position and when it came to setting fees it was agreed that they should remain as set in 2003, viz: unwaged student \$15; retirees \$25; Waged members \$35; Family membership \$45; Institutions \$50.

The election of Officers and Committee members went off without any argument and we ended up with a slightly enlarged committee. Current members are:

### *Officers*

Patron: Geoffrey Blainey  
President: Peter Bell  
Secretary/Treasurer Mel Davies

### Committee –

ACT Chris Carter, Barry McGowan.  
S.A. Ross Both, Greg Drew  
NSW Graydon Henning, Ross Mainwaring  
NT David Carment.  
Qld Ruth Kerr, Jan Wegner,  
Diane Menghetti  
Vic David White, Sandra Kippen.  
WA Patrick Bertola, Wendy Carter,  
Charlie Fox, Richard Hartley,  
Gerry MacGill, Sachiko Sone.  
TAS Greg Dickens, Glyn Roberts.  
NZ Brian Hill, Philip Hart.

## Journal

The second volume of the journal will arrive with this newsletter. However, the press never stops, so can I request that if you have a paper

to submit for the 2005 volume, that you send it in **asap**, as it takes a lot of work and time of referees, etc., to get the journal into printable form. Before doing so, either look on the web, or request a copy of the style sheet for instructions on how to present your paper. If you abide by the instructions, it saves a lot of work on this side of the fence.

## **Forthcoming Conferences**

### ***Eureka 150 Democracy Conference***

***University of Ballarat***

***25-27 November 2004***

The conference 'Releasing the spirit of democracy' will celebrate perhaps Australia's most significant democratic anniversary, that of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Eureka Stockade. The organizers invite proposals for papers in five areas and call for abstracts not exceeding 250 words in following areas. While proposals close on 30 July, there's always the off chance that a desperate appeal will succeed! Areas to be covered are:

a) Setting the Scene: Democratic movements in the 1850s in Ballarat, other goldfields, and in other areas.

b) From Eureka to Federation: The impact of the Eureka Stockade on the style and temper of government in Australia and its impact on later democratic movements.

c) The Moulding of Australian Identity: Considering the use of the Eureka flag, literary and artistic responses, political and social movements, celebrations and movements.

d) Excluded from Democracy: A consideration of those excluded from the democratic process, e.g., Aboriginal people and the Chinese in the nineteenth century.

e) E-democracy: Current and future trends of using technology to increase participation in government.

Handling the abstracts and enquiries is member Anne Beggs Sunter who can be contacted at:

School of Behav. & Soc. Science. & Humanit.

University of Ballarat,  
P.O. Box 663 Ballarat, Vic 3353  
E.mail: [a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au)

For registration and further enquiries, contact:

Hotline: 1300 304 803;

Fax: 3 5334 4548 e.mail:  
[Conference@organisedsuccess.com](mailto:Conference@organisedsuccess.com)

Web:[www.eureka150-ubdemocracy.com](http://www.eureka150-ubdemocracy.com)

### ***Mining History Association, USA. Scranton, Pennsylvania 16-19 June 2005.***

The Mining History Association invites proposals for papers to be presented at its 2005 meeting. Papers may be on any topic or geographic area associated with mining history. Proposals must include the name and mailing/e-mail address of presenter, title of paper, abstract of paper (not to exceed one page). Proposals must be submitted by November 30, 2004 to Richard Francaviglia, Program Chair, The University of Texas at Arlington, The Center of Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, Box 19497, Arlington, Texas 76019.

Presenters will be invited to submit their papers for consideration in the Mining History Journal that is published annually. Please note that speakers must register for the conference in order to give their presentations.

[www.mininghistoryassociation.org](http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org)

The meeting's venue - Scranton - is in the heart of Pennsylvania's anthracite coal mining region and near historic metals-mining locales in Pennsylvania and adjacent states.

For Inquiries Contact:

Johnny Johnsson, Conference  
Chairman, 2622 Deer Park Road,  
Finksburg, Maryland, USA 21048

E.mail: [johnnyj@qis.net](mailto:johnnyj@qis.net)

***14th South Australian State History Conference 'Blast From The Past' - Whyalla, South Australia, 28-29 May 2005.***

The 2005 conference will focus on the histories of South Australia's rural and industrial communities, with a particular focus on northern South Australia.

Session themes of interest to members include:

- Indigenous communities
- Company towns
- South Australia's nuclear history
- Industrial and mining history
- Transport and communications
- Playford's rural and industrial legacy
- People in South Australia's rural landscape – their origins, settlement patterns, politics, health and lifestyles
- Interpreting rural and industrial life

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words and must be submitted by 31 December 2004. They should include the name of the author, which theme the proposed paper addresses, an overview of the paper and full contact details. A preliminary indication of audio-visual requirements would also be appreciated. Abstracts should be submitted by email: [kwalsh@history.sa.gov.au](mailto:kwalsh@history.sa.gov.au) or posted to: Conference Convenor, History Trust of South Australia, GPO Box 1836, Adelaide, SA 5001. Further details can be obtained from Kate Walsh or Jan Mudge, Community History Unit, History Trust of South Australia, on 08-8203 9888.

***AMHA Conference Bendigo 11- 14 July 2005***

**Call for papers:**

It's never too early! Please register your intention to present a paper as soon as possible as this will help the organizers to properly plan the programme. **Abstracts** (Maximum 250 words) need to be forwarded to the AMHA Secretary by **30 MARCH 2005**. With a large number of people already expressing their interest then we might have to refuse late submissions – so get that brain and computer working and act!

**New Publications**

L. J. Buller (Compiler), *Mining in Cornwall – Volume 7: South Crofty Mine – The East Pool & Agar Mines*, Tempus Publishing, Stroud, 2004.

SA member Keith Johns (an illustrious descendant of the first Captain at the Burra Burra Mines in 1845, Cornish immigrant, Thomas Roberts) has once again been keeping up to date with publications on his ancestral land. He notes the following on this latest addition to Jeff Buller's *Mining in Cornwall* series (see earlier comment in Newsletter Issue 22, No. 4 December 2001; Issue 25, No. 2, June 2001; Issue 35, No. 4, December 2003)

In this volume seven of his series, Jeff Bullen depicts three mines from the Central Mining District, based on the Camborne-Pool-Redruth area, which includes the most concentrated mining operations and the deepest and most productive mines in the County. Annotated photographs depict scenes underground and at the surface, mostly from the period 1900 until closure of mining activity that was caused by the dramatic collapse of the tin price on the London Metal Exchange in 1985. The mines depicted were world famous, directly employing many thousands of men, women and children, and indirectly, a considerable labour force involved in a host of supply and ancillary industries.

The author provides a remarkable portrayal of an industry based on copper and tin that is now consigned to history.

Copies at £12.99 from: Tempus Publishing, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, UK, GL52QG, or order through [www.tempus\\_publishing.com](http://www.tempus_publishing.com)

## Bits-and Pieces

### *Winding from Multiple Shafts!*

Gerry MacGill sent in this piece of information that he believed would amuse readers. I must admit that as an ignoramus in things mechanical I failed to understand the technical bits, nor to see the funny side, but I expect that lots of you out there will be rolling on the floor! The information is quoted from Mike Gill of the UK (Gerry's half-brother I wonder?) and is taken from the mining history list at:

[mining-history@JISMAIL.AC.UK](mailto:mining-history@JISMAIL.AC.UK)

'Earlier this year, someone asked about arrangements for winding from a number of shafts, using just one engine.

Today I was sat looking through the Mines Inspector's Reports (Mr Evans) for 1866 and came across two drawings (plan and elevation) of such a contrivance at the ironstone pits on Glasshouse Common, near Whittington in Derbyshire. Here, the Sheepbridge Coal & Iron Co. Ltd was using a single cylinder engine to wind from 15 shallow shafts. There were 9 drums on a horizontal shaft and another six on a vertical shaft which was driven by bevel gears from the first shaft.

The Inspector considered this to be too much! The company objected and so the great and good were called in to arbitrate, with the result that no more than 12 shafts could be wound and no new ones added at a greater distance than the present ones.

The drawings appeared to show that the various diameter drums were fixed to the shafting - no clutches were apparent'.

So, there you have it – and if you're rolling on the floor then please let me know why, or perhaps I should ask Gerry MacGill for a few lessons in humour!?

### *Junk Scrip*

Brian Hill (NZ) has some useful information for owners of redundant share certificates. He states that if the share certificates are in good condition they may be of interest to collectors

and he recommends sending them for sale to GKR Bonds Ltd, Unit 4 Park Farm, Kelvedon Road, Inworth, Colchester CO5 9SH. Tel. 01376 571711;

Email: [gkr4@hotmail.com](mailto:gkr4@hotmail.com)

GKR Bonds are dealers in old bonds and share certificates and they produce a very good catalogue several times a year. Brian concludes by saying that he has dealt with them for years, and they are very reputable.

### *Heritage Listing*

Tracey Rich, Heritage Outreach Officer with EPBC (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation) has drawn attention to the new federal heritage system that seeks creation of a new National Heritage list. Anyone can nominate a place, 'though the nomination will have to meet specific criteria to qualify. The goal is to develop an inventory of places that tell the story of the nation - culturally and naturally. Mining obviously fits into this picture. To subscribe to the listings e-bulletin,

e.mail: [heritage@wwf.org.au](mailto:heritage@wwf.org.au)

To find out more, see the web at:

[www.deh.gov.au/heritage](http://www.deh.gov.au/heritage)

## Seeking Information

### *Long lost Kiwis*

Our friend Philip Hart from the other side of the Tasman is seeking information on long lost Kiwis. He is particularly interested in two miners and prospectors who worked in Australia in the 1850s. The people in question are:

**Harry Kenrick**, who mined in Victoria, and **Daniel Leahy**, who arrived in New Zealand from Australia in September 1861.

If perchance you've stumbled upon the said gentlemen then Philip would appreciate a call at: [prhart@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:prhart@waikato.ac.nz) or write to 129 Cambridge Street, Hamilton, NZ.

### ***George Hooley, Prospector***

Carmel Capewell wishes to know whether anyone has information on her prospector grandfather, George Hooley, who is reported to have discovered the White Cliff Opal field.

*The Sydney Mail*, 14 April 1894, claimed: 'The field was first discovered to contain the precious opal in 1889 by two kangaroo hunters named J. Hooley and [?A] Richardson in the following strange manner. They were plying their hunting avocation and had fired at and wounded a kangaroo, which however, though hurt, bounded onward at so great a speed that the hunter lost sight of him, and endeavoured to track him by the blood stains on the grass and stones over which he had passed. During this search Mr Hooley took up a piece of stone, showing as he thought blood upon it, but was surprised to find it was the red fire of an opal stone of a very brilliant hue. The finders, having had some experience at the opal mines in Queensland, took the stone to Wilcannia, and submitted it for examination to the local jeweller and lapidary, who pronounced it to be an opal of the first quality. Acting upon this expert's opinion, they forthwith returned to the White Cliffs and, selecting a site, pegged out two 80-acre blocks, one of which they leased; the other they held under mineral license. They then prospected the ground with success, and discovered within a foot of the surface many splendid stones rich in opal. They continued working with profitable results for some three years. Then they sold a share to [?Clodston] and Turner. and some time after, sold the other portion to an opal buyer from Melbourne. The property was subsequently put into a syndicate, and is now known as the White Cliffs Opal Mining Company. The mines are being worked by tributors, and also by wage men'.

George Hooley was listed as living at Gill Street, Montana (a suburb of Coolgardie) in 1900 and 1901. He moved from White Hills to Albany around 1896 where his daughter was born. Between 1903 and 1910 he was listed as a mine owner at Kintore. And in 1911 listed as at Carbine. In 1921 he worked as a labourer on Hamersley Station, out of Roebourne. In 1928 he turned up as a prospector near Port Hedland in the Pilbarra where he died c.1932.

During the 1920s he appears to have been in the NW of WA and NT. There is a Hooley Creek and Hooley Well in Pilbarra and an Edith Creek in the Northern Territory (his wife's name was Edith).

Carmel is interested to know whether any of our members have come across him during their research. She is particularly interested to learn about his Queensland and also South Australian connections. Please contact at: [plltd@btconnect.com](mailto:plltd@btconnect.com)

### **Registration – Bendigo**

The registration form for our 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference in July 2005 is enclosed with this newsletter. The earlier you reply, the easier it will be for the organisers to cope with the various bookings and other planning matters. As you will see, there is a good balance between social and more academic pursuits and the indications, even before the forms go out, are that this should be a very well supported event.

### **Secretary's contact**

Please note that the Sec's telephone and fax number have changed to 08-6488 2939 and 08-64881016 respectively.

MJD/Oct'04

This is a 'long shot'! I am researching the career & links of a mining engineer called Robert Richard(s) NANCARROW who lived and worked in PONTRHYDYGROES in Cardiganshire, Wales. UK. He was born into an ex pat Cornish Mining Family in 1884 and worked in the local lead mining industry through the 1900's and into the 1920's depression. He lived in the village all his life and died there in the 1960's. He had three children, two daughters and a son. I know that a grand-daughter is extremely interested in mining history and that she is living in Australia. She is noted as having visited the Aberystwyth area some years ago to research her grandfather. I have no name for her but she may well be a member of your organisation! The reason for the contact is simply this: I chair a local community regeneration group operating in the old mining district and are promoting a mining heritage initiative in the area. Robert Nancarrow's role in the local mining tradition should be better recognised! I have a personal interest in this story as I own and operate the local mining museum complex.<<http://www.silverminetours.co.uk>>. Can you help?  
Peter Lloyd Harvey

Contact: [Silverrivermine@aol.com](mailto:Silverrivermine@aol.com)

MJD/Oct'04



# AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 4 DECEMBER 2004

Patron: Professor Geoffrey Blainey, AC

ABN 96 220 329 754

Web page: <http://www.econs.ecel.uwa.edu.au/AMHA/amhamain.htm>

ISSUE 39

### Editorial

Members will no doubt be shocked by the recent tsunami disaster, the mind-boggling extent of the human tragedy and the thought of how fragile is life when faced with the full wrath of nature. That event brings to mind the often man-made tragedies that have visited mining communities over the centuries and which are still being experienced today. That thought was brought into focus when a week or so ago it was mentioned in the press that there had been great loss of life in a mine explosion in China. That such occurrences in that country are tragically common was reinforced when reported that in 2004 some 5,000 plus miners had died in underground mining accidents. In October, at the Daping Mine and Central Henan province some 148 miners were killed in a massive explosion, while on 29 November more than 140 miners were trapped by flood waters in the Chenjiashan coal mine in Shaanxi Province with little hope of survival. Death is a daily occurrence among the thousands of state, private and village mines that abound in that country. Many of these accidents are due to lack of adequate safety measures and lack of adequate training. Today, we in the antipodes take such precautions for granted. However, it is stated, the latest tragedy has been openly recognised by the political leadership in China – perhaps a recognition that augers a change

of attitude towards a safer mining environment in that country. China is today following a path of rapid economic development, perhaps reminiscent of the industrialisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when winning coal in western countries was often considered to take priority over sanctity of life. Let us hope that China takes heed of the lessons of history (and of current safety practices in other parts of the world) so as to reduce the human toll that we as mining historians have come to identify with the story of mining throughout our own economic development.

### Journal

Articles are now being urgently solicited for the third volume of our *Journal of Australasian Mining History*. Contributors may prepare articles for the refereed or un-refereed sections and instructions as to layout, etc., can be seen at our website, or by requesting a copy from the AMHA Secretary. Incidentally, if you want copies of the first two volumes they can be purchased for a mere \$20 (see membership form).

## **Forthcoming Conferences**

***AMHA Conference Bendigo 11- 14 July 2005***

### **Call for papers:**

Please get your abstracts in by **30 March** - that's only 3 months away, so don't delay. It would also be appreciated if registration forms could be returned asap, as this will greatly help in the planning of the event – something that would be greatly appreciated by the organizers.

***International Mining History Congress, Belgium 10-15 October 2006***

For details see the Web pages that be set up in February (in whichever language turns you on!).

<http://www.miningheritage.org>

<http://www.patrimoineminier.org>

<http://www.bergbau.org>

<http://www.mijnergoed.org>

## **Bits-and Pieces**

*Bendigo accommodation!*

Philip Hart has booked an el-cheapo room (with two beds) through the [www.bendigotourism.com](http://www.bendigotourism.com) site at [Buzza@bendigo.net.au](mailto:Buzza@bendigo.net.au). If anyone wishes to share with Philip could you please contact him at [prhart@mailserv.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:prhart@mailserv.waikato.ac.nz)

With the conference only 5 months away, this might also act as a reminder to get into action on the booking front!

On another matter, you'll note how sparse this newsletter is compared with most previous broadsheets. So, any great (or minor) thoughts, comments, observations, etc., that you might like to contribute to these pages would be greatly welcomed.

## **Heritage**

Ruth Kerr suggests that those interested in heritage should take a look at the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) and the World Heritage Report at [http://www.international.icomos.org/world\\_heritage/whlgaps.htm](http://www.international.icomos.org/world_heritage/whlgaps.htm)

The following excerpt from this excellent report will give some idea of the issues touched upon.

'The topic of "gaps" in the World Heritage List is first of all concerned with a seemingly simple question: which cultural properties of outstanding universal value, for which everybody should feel responsible, are not on the List? Criteria i - vi in the Operational Guidelines were developed to identify the outstanding universal value of cultural heritage. What is considered as cultural heritage is still defined by the World Heritage Convention of 1972: monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. Of course, it goes without saying that in the decades since the World Heritage Convention was adopted, society's ideas of "cultural heritage" have expanded considerably. For instance, the categories of "cultural landscapes" and "cultural routes" have been developed within the framework of the implementation of the Convention. The need to include

works of outstanding universal value from rural settlements and vernacular architecture, the heritage of the industrial age, and the heritage of the modern age, taking into account that the 20th century is now history, has been acknowledged. While the List based on the 1972 Convention generally expects some physical evidence on a site, the need to acknowledge intangible aspects is one of the current challenges of the listing process. This is strengthened by UNESCO's adoption of the International Convention For the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (17 October 2003).'

## Seeking Information

### *Australian contact*

Peter Lloyd Harvey, writes: This is a 'long shot'! I am researching the career & links of a mining engineer called Robert Richard(s) NANCARROW who lived and worked in Pontrhydygroes in Cardiganshire, Wales. UK. He was born into an ex-pat Cornish Mining family in 1884 and worked in the local lead mining industry through the 1900's and into the 1920's depression. He lived in the village all his life and died there in the 1960's. He had three children, two daughters and a son. I know that a grand daughter is extremely interested in mining history and that she is living in Australia. She is noted as having visited the Aberystwyth area some years ago to research her grandfather. I have no name for her but she may well be a member of your organisation! The reason for the contact is simply this: I chair a local community regeneration group operating in the old mining district and are promoting a mining heritage initiative in the area. Robert Nancarrow's role in the local mining tradition should be better recognised! I have a personal interest in this story as I own and operate the local mining museum complex. <<http://www.silverminetours.co.uk>>.

Peter can be contacted at:  
[Silverrivermine@aol.com](mailto:Silverrivermine@aol.com)

## **WA Coal**

Helen Walker Mann is undertaking research for Vol. 3 of the Wollaston Journals (in collaboration with Geoffrey Bolton) and came across a reference to early searches for coal in WAs south-west. In March 1849 the Rev. Wollaston was in Albany when he wrote in a letter to the Colonial secretary:

'I was unavoidably much worried in my last communication by the 'Fanny Fisher', respecting the expedition to search for Coal. — From what has since transpired, it seems certain that the Explorers must have missed the spot, discovered by Mr Rae. — That Coal exists near the Coast, I have no doubt in my own mind. — No overland Expedition however has yet started, nor do I think there is here *sufficient* strength & energy for the purpose.

Mr McDonald, I am informed, is communicating to Mr Camfield the extent of his knowledge. The termination of the Granite formation, & commencement of the Slate, as evidenced in West & Middle Mount Barren respectively, I shd have thought an important feature in the nature of the Country.'

Helen would like to hear from anyone with any information on the expeditions and would especially appreciate learning who Mr Rae and Mr McDonald were? She presumes the expeditions were unsuccessful Helen can be contacted at:

22 Sayle Street, Yarra Glen, VIC  
3775. Tel. 03 9730 1283  
Mob: 0429 006 152  
E.mail: [hmann@hotmail.net.au](mailto:hmann@hotmail.net.au)

## Membership Fees

Yes, afraid that it's that time of year again when you are asked to dip into your pockets.

Our fees remain as in 2004, and with a journal thrown in, the membership remains a bargain.

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## Seasons Greetings



An unlikely scene on a 40 degree  
Christmas day  
in Perth!

MJD/Dec'04