



AUSTRALIAN
MINING
HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

AMHA

18th Annual Conference

4-11 November, 2012. Waihi, New Zealand



Waihi



New Zealand's
**heart
of gold**

Greetings from Waihi

Waihi is located 150 kilometres southeast of Auckland and 70 kilometres north of Tauranga in the Hauraki District on the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand, and has a population of about 4,500 people. Located at the base of the Coromandel Peninsula in a stunningly scenic part of the country, Waihi has a rich mining history and an abundance of interesting and easy walkways. Only 12 kilometres away at Waihi Beach is a nine kilometre-long stretch of golden sand, one of the safest surf beaches in New Zealand and popular for fishing.

As a result of the discovery of the Martha lode in 1880, Waihi became one of the most important gold and silver mine centres in the world and this history of mining is apparent everywhere. Waihi is still very much a gold mining town. Mining in Waihi spans three centuries, with the Martha open pit plus Favona and Trio underground mines currently operational.

Waihi will be offering all attendees to the 2012 Australian Mining History Association a treasure-trove of gold mining history and relics on the planned field day experiences. Evidence of the past can be savoured as you walk along a variety of tracks and bush tramways, following rivers and through regenerating native bush.

During your stay the Waihi Historic Gold Mining Museum & Art Gallery will open extended hours for delegates and their partners, \$5.00 entry. Originally the Waihi Manual Training & Technical School, this facility was built to allow senior scholars to undergo manual training. The 1913 building of brick rendered in plaster as a precaution against fire is the only survivor of a number of buildings constructed in this period.

The Australian Mining History Association 18th Annual Conference.
Early Trans-Tasman Mining Links and Industrial Relations
4-11 November, 2012. Waihi, New Zealand

Registration

Sunday 4 November 2-4pm & Tuesday 6 November 1-3pm
Waihi Memorial Hall, Seddon Street.

Conference Overview

As a precursor to the conference, field trip excursions are planned for Monday & Tuesday, 5 - 6 November.

Monday 5 November 2012

• Field Trip

We visit Karangahake, site of the 1875 gold rush and the location of the first field trial of the cyanide process for extraction of gold from low grade quartz ore in New Zealand in 1894 at the Crown Battery. A short easy walk leads you along the picturesque Waitawheta River on the Windows Walk to the Talisman Mine's Pump Room, a huge underground cavern constructed to house the enormous pumping machinery needed to de-water the mine levels below the river.

As we make our way to the Coromandel Peninsula we pass through Paeroa and Thames. Paeroa is "World Famous in New Zealand" as the home of Lemon & Paeroa - the flavoured beverage - as the iconic giant L&P bottle which stands in Ohinemuri Park depicts. We enjoy a brief coach tour around Thames, site of the 1867 gold rush, and built on the pioneering industries of gold mining and kauri logging. Many of the buildings have typical mining town architecture and present a unique microcosm of such towns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Keep your eyes out for one of the three Pillar Box V.R. post boxes cast in 1869, considered to be the oldest still in service in New Zealand.

Leaving Thames we wind our way up the Thames Coast towards Coromandel town with a brief photographic opportunity to capture the spectacular coastline and rugged volcanic hills cloaked in native rainforest. Coromandel is named after HMS Coromandel, an 1820s supply ship and is the site of the first New Zealand gold find in 1852 at Driving Creek. The town boomed in the 1800s, and has an interesting past, much of which is still evident.

Lunch will be supplied at the Coromandel Gold Stamper Battery. This building, commissioned by the New Zealand Government, was opened August 16th, 1900. Its purpose was to process ore from over 65 different mines in the Coromandel area. It is powered by New Zealand's biggest

working water wheel and was also the first stamper in the country to be started with a diesel motor running part of the plant. Today this is a fully operational working museum, demonstrating the process from crushing the ore to the final product – gold.

Late afternoon we visit Driving Creek Railway and

Potteries and take a one-hour ride on New Zealand's only mountain narrow-gauge railway during which you will observe interesting engineering, unique art features and replanted native kauri forest. Bring your camera and binoculars to capture the panoramic views from the Eyefull Tower terminus.

Our overnight stay, set amongst magnificent native bush overlooking the harbour, is at the Coromandel Anchor Lodge: anchorlodge@xtra.co.nz
www.anchorlodgecoromandel.co.nz

Pre-conference attendees will need to make their own booking arrangements.

• Entertainment

After dinner at 'The Top Pub' we visit the Coromandel School of Mines for an evening lecture.

Tuesday 6 November 2012

• Field Trip

Departing Coromandel we wind inland, crossing over the ridge for lunch at Wharekau, where Ngati Hei greeted Captain Cook when the English explorer visited the area in 1769 and observed the transit of the planet Mercury across the face of the sun.

After morning tea we travel down the east coast to visit the privately owned Broken Hills underground gold mine and have a picnic in the bush.

This historic mine site was pegged out in 1895 and a

considerable amount of money was spent in opening up the mine, but by 1910 it had ceased operating. To get up-close and personal with a "modern" underground operation just takes an easy walk through regenerating native bush. There will be an opportunity to enter an original adit and explore tunnels where you will see at first hand the skills of the early miners, current workings and equipment used in the past and today.

• Entertainment

At 5pm delegates will take part in a traditional Maori welcome on to the Waihi Community Marae. John Tregidga, Hauraki District Council Mayor, will welcome delegates to the district. This will be followed by dinner and a cultural experience.

Wednesday 7 November 2012

• Papers all morning

• Field Trip

After lunch we visit the 1904 Cornish Pumphouse used to pump water from the 600 metres-deep underground



Mine owner Stu Rabone will guide us through the historic and currently operating Broken Hills mine on the Coromandel Peninsula.



Century-old drives and mine workings still exist.

workings at the early Martha Mine. In recent years historic underground mine workings threatened the stability of the ground underneath this three storey-high building and in 2006 it was shifted in one piece to its present site. We will then tour the Martha Mine which has operated as an open pit since 1987, and the processing, water treatment plants and rehabilitated areas around the site.

- **Papers after afternoon tea**

- **Entertainment**

The Waihi Drama Club will entertain us in the evening with a mining related production.

Thursday 8 November 2012

- **Papers all morning.**

- **Field Trip**

After lunch we visit the Victoria Battery Tramway & Museum. This was the site of the largest quartz crushing plant in Australasia, built in 1897 to process ore mined from the Martha Mine. The remains of the interlocking hexagon concrete supports for the cyanide treatment tank foundations are unique to the Victoria Battery. The ore roasting kilns and ore extraction tunnels are accessible, as is the transformer house, home to an impressive display of mining relics and photographs.

Taking a nostalgic scenic Goldfields Train trip we return to the Waihi Railway Station. This historic precinct which dates from 1905 has considerable historical, architectural, social and technological significance as the most complete collection of early railway buildings remaining in New Zealand.

- **Entertainment**

After the AMHA AGM and an evening meal we gather for a Mining Quiz in the Waihi Memorial Hall.

Friday 9 November 2012

- **Field Trip**

Once again we board the coaches and travel north to the Department of Conservation's Visitor Centre in the Kauaeranga Valley. The bush clad hills, rocky outcrops, pinnacles, bluffs and gorges all add to some spectacular scenery, a testimony to the area's volcanic origin.

The valley was once filled with magnificent kauri trees but from the 1870s to the 1920s the area was extensively logged. The trimmed kauri logs were cut to length and transported to streams and rivers via log shutes, skidder roads and bush tramways. They were then stockpiled until they could be moved using driving dams. These kauri dams made it possible for timber to be extracted from otherwise inaccessible parts of the bush. The centre has audio-visual presentations and photographic displays on kauri milling and the life of the workers and their families. A short walk from the centre is a model kauri dam, which will be "tripped" to show how they worked.

In Thames we will have a short visit to the Bella Street Pumphouse building erected 1897-98 to house the "Big Pump" designed to remove 2,000 litres of water a minute from depths of 300 metres.

We step back in time with a visit to the Thames School of Mines & Mineral Museum. The classrooms look and smell exactly as they did in the 1880s. As you explore the buildings, you will learn about the history and science of gold mining mineralogical collections, used to teach miners about the rocks and minerals they encountered in their work.

We are fortunate to be able to visit the still operating A&G Price Foundry established in Thames in 1871. In addition to making a wide range of mining equipment, the firm was widely known for its bush locomotives and ship building and introduced the Pelton Wheel to New Zealand in 1884.

- **Entertainment**

The evening meal will be at the Waihi Beach RSA where archaeologist, Brigid Gallagher (ex UK Time Team - popular TV programme) will address us on mining archaeology.

Saturday 10 November 2012

- **Papers all day**

We combine with Labour History Group in the morning. There may be commemorations relating to the May-November 1912 Waihi Miners' Strike that members can attend as well.

- **Entertainment**

Conference Dinner at Waihi Memorial Hall.

Sunday 11 November 2012

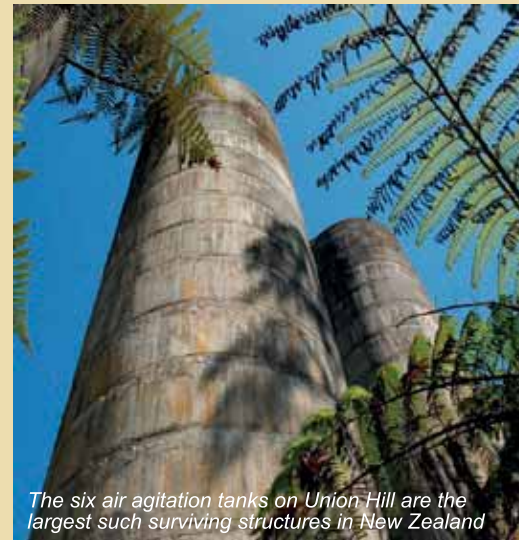
- **Field Trips**

Green from Gold:

Travel to the Waitekauri Valley to visit the rehabilitated Golden Cross mining area where gold mining commenced in 1875 and after "a hiss and a roar" the mines closed down in 1914. The area was actively explored during the 1980s and modern mine production from open pit and underground methods started in 1991 before closing in 1998.

Union Hill-Waihi Battery:

Union Hill is a notable heritage area with concrete buildings and foundations scattered over the site providing a lasting legacy of a rich and colourful mining era. The six air-agitation ferro-concrete cyanide tanks are the largest surviving tanks in New Zealand. Ten ore roasting kilns are also in remarkable condition. An underground mining operation which is not accessible to the public is currently taking place beneath the 1900s mining shafts and tunnels.



The six air agitation tanks on Union Hill are the largest such surviving structures in New Zealand

Optional extras

Helicopter Flights

15 minutes duration flying over Waihi, Martha Mine, the rehabilitated Golden Cross mine and the lower Coromandel Peninsula are offered on the morning of Sunday 11th November at NZ\$100.00 per person, five passengers per flight. We need 30 passengers for flights to proceed (i.e. six flights).

Waihi Cemetery Visit

Visit the Waihi Cemetery which contains a range of special graves and unique stories relating to mining heritage.

Papers

Early Trans-Tasman Links and Industrial Relations

Papers on any aspect of this theme are encouraged, however papers on all topics related to mining history are welcome. Presentations will be for 20-25 minutes, allowing 5 minutes for questions.

Expressions of interest in presenting a paper should be given a title and brief outline (up to 50 words), and be sent to Philip Hart at prhart@waikato.ac.nz by **30 June 2012**.

The final date for selected presenters to submit their title, an abstract not exceeding 250 words and brief biographical notes is 31 August 2012.

All those presenting papers must register for the conference.

Please note: there may be changes to the proposed programme as planning for the 2012 AMHA Conference progresses.

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The early days. Looking towards Waihi's Martha mine from Union Hill



The 'Mighty Martha' started as an underground mine in the nineteenth century and still operates today as an open pit in the town of Waihi


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