

# *Journal of Australasian Mining History*

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## AUTHOR DETAILS AND ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES

**Robert Ashley. M.A.:** *The Life and Times of Edward Bovill Chandler: In Search of El Dorado*

Descending from early pioneers of Beechworth and Chiltern, Robert Ashley has had a long involvement with the district and has been active in historical circles for nearly 50 years. He has published articles and books about the area and, iron smelting near Ballarat.

Edward Bovill Chandler was a miner involved in the fabulously rich Woolshed during the 1850's. While relatively unknown, he was a member of the Mining Board, a Woolshed boss connected with the famous Golden Horseshoes event, and a pioneer of the El Dorado gold field. Chandler's journey from riches to poverty and burial in an unmarked grave was the fate of many miners who struck it rich only to vanish, except for occasional lines in old newspapers. Yet one of those lines acknowledged him as 'a prince among prospectors'.

**Clive Beauchamp:** *Disaster at the Australian Agricultural Company's Mine, Hamilton NSW, 1889*

Dr Clive Beauchamp is an Adjunct Associate Professor (semi-retired) at Charles Sturt University-Bathurst and has taught at tertiary institutions in the Australia, UK and in the USA. He has published a number of articles on mining topics. Currently he is engaged in a long-term project studying the migration of Welsh coalminers to the Northern Coalfield of New South Wales and Queensland.

On the morning of June 1889 a devastating roof fall at the Hamilton colliery near Newcastle, NSW resulted in the deaths of 11 miners. A brief history of the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), the owners of the mine, is given, as background to the disaster. Additionally, the operations of the mine are outlined. The paper describes in detail the initial roof fall and its impact. It also concentrates on the attempts of the rescue and recovery teams to free the 'entombed miners' and their eventual withdrawal on account of dangerous conditions. Focus is also placed on the criticisms made of the long delay in resuming recovery operations and on the techniques employed.

The findings and recommendations of the two inquests are detailed together with the protracted process of dispensing financial relief to the victim's families. The case of Ford v AACo 1890 is covered briefly as well as the need for mining reform.

**Victor Bibby:** *William Bibby: Gold Miner, Engineer & Pioneer - His Life in Australia from 1859 to 1888*

Victor Bibby is a retired engineer who started his career in the Australian Army. He retired as a Major and started another career in commercial aviation, much spent overseas. He returned to Australia in the aftermath of the Hawke and Keating years, continued working in aviation seeing even more of the world, much of it through aeroplane and hotel windows. Following his final retirement he decided to research his ancestry, which has resulted in publication of a book *Golden Raub – William's story*.

Based on this research, this article looks at the life of his paternal great-grandfather, larger-than-life Liverpool-born adventurer, traveller, miner and engineer, William Bibby, who played a part in the development and management of gold mines in Australia and Malaya. Also examined is the parallel family situation in Victoria where William's wife Ellen maintained the stability of a large family during his long absences. Despite many setbacks, Bibby gained respect through his judicious management of men and mines, many of which proved profitable under his endeavours.

**Lloyd Carpenter**, <Lloyd.Carpenter@lincoln.ac.nz> *A Conspiracy to Silence: Reports of Otago gold prior to 1861*

Lloyd Carpenter (Ngāti Toa Rangatira), has worked in sales and insurance, was a Salvation Army officer, taught Mathematics and Economics at secondary school, and in 2013 completed a PhD at the University of Canterbury, which examined aspects of the Central Otago gold rush. He is a lecturer in Māori Studies and Early New Zealand History at Lincoln University and publishes widely on Australasian gold rushes, Māori history, heritage, wine history and early colonial gastronomy.

Much of Otago goldfields history begins with the idea that a ruling class of newspaper-owning, ‘Old Identity’ settlers paternalistically subverted news of Otago gold finds to hold back the morally-corrupting influence of the ‘New Iniquity’ of gold miners. However, a search of newspaper articles before 1860 reveals gold being found – and reported – across the province from the first years of settlement. The newspaper editors, albeit after an initial fear of the ‘mania’ of gold rushes, held nothing back from their readers.

This article discusses the events leading up to the ‘official’ recognition of the Otago gold rush, examines the historiography of the ideas of newspaper cover-ups and compares the situation in America and Australia, reaching a new conclusion about gold reports in New Zealand.

**Peter Davies and Susan Lawrence**: <peter.davies@latrobe.edu.au>, <s.lawrence@latrobe.edu.au>: *Bitumen paper pipes and technology transfer on the Victorian goldfield*

Peter Davies is a research associate in Archaeology at La Trobe University. He is the author of several books, including *An Archaeology of Institutional Confinement: The Hyde Park Barracks, 1848-1886* (with Penny Crook and Tim Murray, 2013). He also co-edits the journal *Australasian Historical Archaeology*.

Susan Lawrence teaches historical archaeology at La Trobe University. She is past-president of the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology, a member of the Heritage Council of Victoria’s Archaeology Advisory Committee, and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Society of Antiquaries of London. She is the author of several books, including *An Archaeology of Australia Since 1788* (with Peter Davies, 2011).

The Victorian mining industry has been characterised by periods of rapid innovation and willingness to experiment with new technology, particularly during the first decade after the discovery of gold. While some new technologies were successful others failed and have been forgotten. Experimentation with bitumen paper pipes used to convey water for sluicing purposes provides a case study for exploring some of the social and logistical processes involved in adopting new technologies. Although the technology proved to be a failure the episode illustrates the openness of the mining industry at this time and the rapidity with which new ideas could be evaluated and if necessary discarded.

**Galiina (Kal) Ellwood**: <bjellwood@bigpond.com> *Aboriginal prospectors and miners of tropical Queensland, from pre-contact times to ca.1950*

Kal is currently a PhD candidate in History and Cultural Heritage at James Cook (Cairns Campus). Kal is of *Yidinji* and *Gugu Yalanji* descent and has a particular interest in Aboriginal cultural continuance and the shared histories of North Queensland.

The history of Aboriginal mining in post-contact Australia has been both neglected by historians and forgotten by the community. In North Queensland alone there are 22 named individuals, 17 named families and an unknown number of the

nameless who were Aboriginal miners and prospectors mentioned in the historical records. This paper aims to correct the general portrayal of Aborigines living under the Act, in tropical Queensland, as powerless victims. It will show that Aboriginal prospectors and miners had more agency than has been credited to them in the past and that some individuals did achieve economic success and social recognition within European society without having to compromise their own culture. They were partly responsible for the economic development of post-contact Queensland through their discoveries of mining fields.

**Apurna Kumar Ghosh and Sentai Wang** <apurna.ghosh@curtin.edu.au> *Evolution of underground coal mine explosion law in Australia, 1887-2007*

Dr Apurna Ghosh graduated from Bengal engineering College, Calcutta in 1993 before taking out a Masters Degree at the Indian School of Mines in 1999, and his PhD at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharapur in 2004. Since 2013 he has taught and conducted research at the Western Australian School of Mines [WASM], Curtin University, Kalgoorlie, where he specialises in Mine Safety management.

Co-author Sentai Wang has recently graduated as an engineer from WASM and is also involved in Mine Safety research.

Underground coalmining has attracted attention because of its poor safety record, and in the early 20th century, the Australian underground coal mining industry had an unacceptably high annual death rate. Today, while the Australian industry has developed safe working practices, resulting in a safer working environment, accidents and fatalities still occur.

In order to achieve the final goal of zero harm, this research attempts to investigate the pattern of safety improvements instigated between 1887-2007. Over a period of a century, a sophisticated legalisation system has been built, resulting in a dramatic improvement in underground coalmine explosion controls. With the continued amendment of existing regulations, the focus of future legalisation will move on to specific regulations for specific mines based on different geological conditions, mining methods and other facets of mining.

**Philip Hart:** <prhart@waikato.ac.nz> *Peter Ferguson and his New Era*

Since taking early retirement to avoid being head of the History Department at the University of Waikato (in Hamilton, New Zealand) for at least another two years, Philip has continued to explore mining areas on foot and to research the social history (in particular) of the Te Aroha Mining District.

Peter Ferguson, a persistent and pugnacious Scottish miner, after managing mines in the Thames district of New Zealand, became one of the most prominent miners on the Waiorongomai goldfield. To construct a rival to the existing battery monopoly he had to overcome vested interests, but with government subsidies he managed to construct a road and a branch tramway to his machine site far up the Waiorongomai Stream. His New Era Company, a private and under-capitalized one, introduced a new process, which was quickly proved to be ineffective. Subsequently, he formed another company with the developers of the MacArthur Forrest cyanide process, but again his Ferguson Syndicate Company was under-funded. Although his plant was reconstructed to utilize cyanide, probably because of the low grade ore in his mines cyanide was not used, and his plant soon shut down. If it had been used, he would have been the second person to test cyanide in New Zealand, but instead his mining career ended in failure.

**Brian R. Hill:** <brhill@senet.com.au> *Early History of Graphite Mining in South Australia*

Brian Hill's research interests include mining finance and 19th century British investment in overseas mining. Researching New Zealand gold mining history is another retirement hobby.

Study of the history of graphite mining in South Australia offers lessons in the unpredictable nature of mineral markets, the hazards of mining investment, and the effect of technological change on old mining fields. That is, how previously dismissed mineral deposits may assume a new importance according to new technological needs. South Australia's Eyre Peninsula is well-endowed with large deposits of graphite mineralisation from which several products can be recovered that are suitable for most of the uses of this industrial mineral. However, all early attempts over the past 100 years to establish a graphite mining industry failed, as the cost of producing graphite in a marketable form proved to be uneconomic. Today, however, with an enhanced market price for graphite stimulated by the withdrawal of much of China's production from the world market, and the development of new uses for graphite, including the new wonder material graphene, the local industry is on the cusp of resurgence, with one of the mines reopening and several others on the drawing board.

**David Lee,** <david.lee@dfat.gov.au> *The Development of Bauxite at Gove, 1955–1975*  
David Lee is Director of the Historical Publications and Research Unit, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and an Adjunct Professor in History, Deakin University.

The article examines the evolution of Commonwealth policy with respect to mining bauxite at Gove, and the complex commercial history which saw the establishment of what became the Northern Territory's largest industrial enterprise in the 1970s. The article confirms that the federal government was just as concerned as the states to make industrial development in Australia a condition of access to large ore deposits. But it also shows how the Menzies government was determined from as early as the mid-1960s to make Australian equity another condition of mining companies obtaining federally-awarded mineral leases. This form of resources nationalism thus predated the policies of the Whitlam Labor government between 1972 and 1975. The article also shows how Australian companies, led by Colonial Sugar Refining, were able to break into the world aluminium oligopoly by harnessing the financial and technical resources of Swiss Aluminium and obtaining favourable conditions from the federal government for the development of Gove's bauxite.

**KEN McQUEEN:** <Ken.McQueen@canberra.edu.au> *Gold in the 'Mundic': The Saga of Dargue's Reef, Majors Creek, NSW*

Ken McQueen is a geologist with a keen interest in mining history. He is Professor of Geochemistry and Landscape Evolution at the University of Canberra.

Dargue's Reef is the largest known bedrock gold deposit in the Majors Creek goldfield of southern New South Wales. It was discovered in 1868 by Joseph Dargue when mining for alluvial gold and worked profitably in the near-surface oxidised zone. Deeper mining revealed the ore to be pyritic and refractory. For more than 140 years numerous ongoing attempts have been made to profitably work the refractory 'mundic', but to date all have failed, though not just because of the metallurgical difficulties. This history of mining highlights the challenges and developments in extracting gold from pyritic gold ores. Dargue's Reef also provides a remarkable example of how the complex interplay of exploration, discovery, optimism, entrepreneurship, metal price, investment climate, management practice, changing technology, societal attitudes and the fundamental geology of a gold deposit determine its mining history.

**Keith Preston:** *Golconda Goldfield, Tasmania: a source of wealth or despair?*

Keith Preston is a retired engineering geologist and geotechnical engineer who continues to research aspects of the Tasmanian mining industry, particularly the widespread application of water power for mineral processing.

Mining on the Golconda goldfield proceeded with few breaks between 1878-1920, largely funded by locally-formed syndicates or small companies floated on the Launceston Stock Exchange. The field weathered the speculation boom of the early 1880s and the 1890s depression, going on to experience resurgence during WW1. Gold output was, however, extremely limited, being disproportionate to the capital expenditure raised by some 20 publicly-listed companies. The longevity of the field was due to prospectors being drawn repeatedly to the field by the lore of the *lost Panama reef* and the willingness of investors to continue financing a succession of short-lived ventures. Profitable working was hindered by a number of factors including the limited extent of quartz lode development, variable though largely poor grades, refractory ores and a shallow water table. This resulted in the retention of inadequate processing practices at the field's only stamp battery where the introduction of water power was enforced by financial restraint. Although modified processing methods were finally adopted, limited finance and falling grades prematurely ended long overdue trials.

**David J. Turton:** <david.turton@anu.edu.au> *Codifying coexistence: land access frameworks for Queensland mining and agriculture in 1982 and 2010*

David J. Turton is a PhD student with the Fenner School of Environment and Society at the Australian National University. He has previously published articles on environmental and public administration history in *Queensland Review* and the *James Cook University Law Review*.

Queensland's accommodation of mining and agriculture through a part voluntary, part statutorily-enshrined Land Access Code (2010), is not without some degree of historical precedent. In 1982 a voluntary Explorer-Landholder Procedures Guide was prepared by the Queensland Chamber of Mines in consultation with the Queensland Grain Growers Association to encourage constructive relations between miners and farmers. Using this instance of cooperation as a case study of compromise and negotiation, the Guide is compared with the current semi-voluntary Code – assessing its potential significance for present-day coal seam gas operations using a 'typology of relevance' for environmental history.