AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Editor: Jan Wegner
Janice.Wegner@jcu.edu.au

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EDITORIAL

Congratulations to the Broken Hill conference committee on what sounds like a very successful conference. Wendy Carter has a well illustrated report on the field trips below.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 29th AMHA Conference in Broken Hill, was held in the first week of September with three days of presentations, three days of field trips and tours and a dinner. 82 delegates attended and it is anticipated that a surplus of over $3K will result. The proceedings of the Conference are available at https://www.mininghistory.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/Proceedings-v5.pdf and feature many interesting papers from past and present mining identities, members and others. A paper was presented by Student Travel Grant winner, Louise Spencer and two senior students from local high schools were also invited to attend.

This year we had a greater level of engagement with the local community through interviews on the ABC in the lead up to the conference and they set up an outside broadcast from the conference foyer. We also had an article in the local newspaper and placed a paid advertisement advising of a low cost "walk up" registration. Several new memberships were taken up at the conference and in subsequent weeks.

The AGM was held and the Executive Committee elected, and the Advisory Committee appointed.

Geoff Hudson

BITS & PIECES

More uses for old mines

Hazelwood coal mine in Victoria, closed in March 2017, is to be filled with water by ENGIE Hazelwood to form a 'vast lake' as big as Sydney Harbour, servicing farmland, an industrial zone, reveged conservation areas, and public access spaces. Until it closed the mine provided brown coal to the Hazelwood and Morwell power stations. The Hazelwood station also closed in 2017. Perhaps tourism centred on the new lake will replace those lost jobs.

Mt Isa survives

Both the Queensland and Federal governments have come to the rescue of

the Mt Isa copper smelter and Townsville copper refinery with a $600 million package to protect Australia's strategic position with regard to copper production. The smelter provides half of Australia's copper smelting capacity and is needed not only for copper mines being developed in the area, but Phosphate Hill which uses the sulphuric acid from the smelter to produce fertiliser. The refinery is historically important for the development in 1978 of the IsaKidd copper refining process, now preferred world wide, and similarly the smelter in conjunction with CSIRO developed the ISASMELT technology, also used internationally. Glencore is expected to come up with a plan to increase the town's sustainability. The funds will also pay for the re-bricking of the 72 year old smelter which has to be done every 4 years, due 2026 – a multi-million dollar job. The 1.9km deep underground copper mine however closed this year and will remain closed.

Re-bricking part of the furnace in 2022

Correction

In the March newsletter, I placed Collie in NSW. Member June Scott pointed out that Collie is, in fact, in WA. Silly me…

CONFERENCE REPORT

Our very active Vice-Prez Wendy Carter sent this photo-essay report on the recent Broken Hill conference field trips:

Tuesday 2 September

This was a glorious weather day which luckily turned into a whole week of glorious weather days! Combined with a fabulous look at the Line of Lode from Pasminco to the North Mine. Then the Browne Shaft at the Junction Mine. The shaft which was erected in the 1890s & named after director Sylvester Browne is a typical early Broken Hill three compartment shaft & the oldest timber shaft in Broken Hill. Later in its history the electric winder operated double decker cages carrying five men on each deck.

The last mine visit of the day was to the Pinnacles, a family owned mine for much of its history until recently when it entered a partnership where it is believed it will have an exciting future!

Thursday 4 September

The conference was organised with papers every second day and trips on the alternate day.

So on Thursday we headed out on the bus to the Daydream Mine and then onto Silverton finishing the day with a leisurely stroll around the Living Desert State Park. Apparently these 12 sandstone sculptures

are the most photographed place in outback Australia and you can certainly see why. These huge blocks were brought from the Wilcannia area in 1993 as part of a sculpture symposium. Sculptors from around the world worked for six weeks before they were unveiled. It was a great way to end a beautiful day.

Out at the Living Desert State Park, with Judy Parslowe admiring the sculpture:

The Day Dawn mine crusher:

At the Day Dream mine: our colourful guide, portable engines, and Richard Mazzachelli:

Mike Williams and winder, Day Dream mine:

Living quarters at the Day Dream mine:

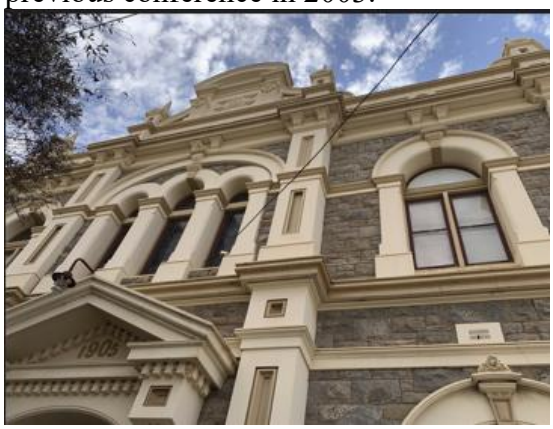
After lunch at the Silverton Pub we ambled around Silverton visiting the various museums from this School Museum to the Mad Max 2 Museum.

The Mad Max museum at Silverton:

Sunset over the Living Desert State Park:

Saturday 6 September

On our last day of the conference we visited the Broken Hill Trades Hall & remembered Bill O'Neill from our previous conference in 2003.



Then on to the Sulphide Street Railway Museum. In the afternoon we visited the Whites Mining Museum where we we enjoyed a fabulous tour with a retired miner who brought the static displays to life for us. Lastly a visit to the Pro Hart Gallery.

Thanks, Wendy! And congratulations to Louise Spencer, who won an AMHA Student Travel Grant to present her paper on 'John Corea: The First Korean Miner in Australia' at the conference.

SAD NEWS

Leonie Knapman 1940-2025

Long term members will have many memories of Leonie. Stephen Imrie has provided this obituary:

Leonie recently passed away after a prolonged illness.

Leonie moved to the Shale Mining town of Glen Davis as an infant and stayed till its closure. Her father, Bill Goodwin, established and ran a coal mine to supply the Shale Works there. The family moved to Mittagong after the works and mine closed in 1954.
Leonie and Greg were regular attendees at AMHA Conferences, with Leonie presenting many papers on the Kerosene Shale Industry. The 2009 AMHA Conference in Lithgow was conducted by Leonie.
Leonie has published three books on Shale Mining Towns – *Joadja Creek, The shale oil town and its people 1870-1913*, *Australian Kerosene Oil & Mineral Co Ltd, Joadja Creek* and *Glen Davis in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales – A Shale Oil Ghost Town and its People 1938-1954.*
It was Leonie that introduced me to the AMHA when she asked me to help with the 2009 Lithgow Conference.

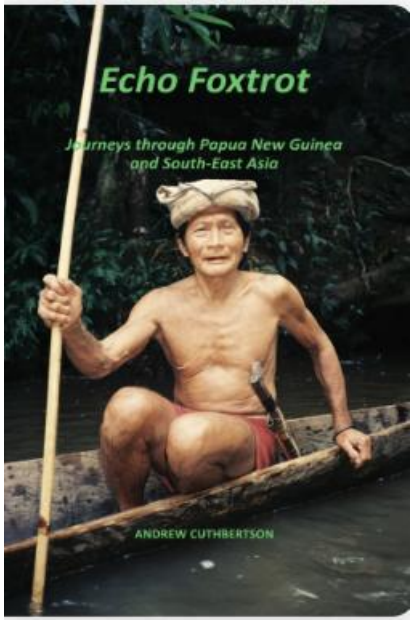
JOURNAL

Editor Lyndon advises that the 2025 journal is now accessible on the AMHA website and the hard copy will soon be at the printers.

Articles are always wanted for the next journal. The Journal welcomes the submission of all kinds of articles related to mining history, including biographical portraits, industrial archaeology, folklore, race relations, tourism, gender, company investment, geology, mining towns and social history. For more details about the submission process, please consult the web page for the journal: https://www.mininghistory.asn.au/journal-2/. Book and film reviews are also welcome. Any queries (and your nicely crafted article) can go to editor Lyndon Megarrity at drlyndon@bigpond.net.au .

PUBLICATIONS

Jason Nitz has contributed this review:
Book Review – Echo Foxtrot by Andrew Cuthbertson



Several years after first starting in the mining industry in the early 2000s, I was asked what career path I would have liked to have followed now I knew more about the industry. My quick reply was "exploration geologist" mainly as the work, locations, routine and adventure appealed to me. Alas, I didn't study geology so there was my first hurdle. As my opportunity to become an exploration geologist seemed a distant dream, I preceded to read as many books written by exploration geologists as I could, so I could live their life through the words and stories they told. Andrew Cuthbertson's Echo Foxtrot is a raw, richly detailed memoir that captures the trials, triumphs, and tribulations of life as an exploration geologist in some of the most remote and geopolitically complex regions of the world. Focusing on his years in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and wider Asia, Cuthbertson offers more than just a catalogue of field experiences—he delivers a compelling portrait of the human and social side of mineral exploration, told with candour, humour, and a sharp eye for place and character.
Echo Foxtrot offers a firsthand account of a period and profession often shrouded in logistical obscurity. Cuthbertson charts his journey from a young geologist with big

dreams to a seasoned field veteran, whose boots-on-the-ground encounters reveal the stark contrast between textbook geology and its unpredictable real-world execution. The "Echo Foxtrot" of the title refers to his radio call sign in the jungles of PNG—fittingly, as radio often served as the lifeline between isolation and civilisation.

Papua New Guinea features prominently in the book and is portrayed not as a mere backdrop, but as a character in its own right. Cuthbertson's descriptions of the country's landscapes—steep ridgelines, torrential rivers, and deep jungle—are evocative and transportive. His recounting of the challenges posed by terrain, weather, disease and often tense local politics, highlight the immense personal and professional risks geologists of that era faced. From navigating tribal disputes to surviving aircraft mishaps and tropical diseases, Cuthbertson's narrative resonates with the grit and resilience familiar to many who've worked in frontier geology.

Of particular interest to mining historians is the book's insight into the early phases of exploration projects that would later grow into globally significant operations—or vanish entirely. Through Cuthbertson's eyes, we see the genesis of mineral discoveries before the arrival of drills and feasibility studies, during the era when helicopters and river canoes were the tools of trade, and intuition and luck were often as valuable as geophysical surveys. The discovery of Wafi by Cuthbertson and others in the early 1980s held personal significance for me. In early 2010, I was a member of the Newcrest Mining team responsible for developing a feasibility study with the objective to assess the viability of twin declines, executed using tunnel boring machines, for the potential development of a substantial block cave mine should the necessary approvals for mining be obtained. To this day, the approval to mine is yet to be granted and one of the largest copper-gold deposits in the world lies undisturbed save for a lot of exploratory drill holes that dot the jungle.

Equally engaging are his stories set in Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, Cuthbertson's work brought him into contact with military regimes, bureaucratic corruption, and cultural misunderstandings that added further complexity to the already arduous life of a field geologist. Yet these sections are far from cynical; they brim with respect for the local people he worked alongside and admiration for their resilience and knowledge of the land.

Cuthbertson's writing style is informal but precise. He balances technical detail with anecdotal storytelling, making the book accessible to both mining professionals and general readers. The occasional insertion of dry humour—often at his own expense—adds warmth and humanity to the narrative.

In summary, Echo Foxtrot is more than a memoir—it is a tribute to a generation of geologists who mapped and sampled their way through some of the world's most challenging environments. For anyone interested in the human history behind the mining industry's modern footprint close to home, this book is a worthy and enlightening read. It reminds us that beneath every mine plan and assay result lies a story of boots, blisters, and bold exploration.

Copies of *Echo Foxtrot* are available from Andrew directly at $35 plus postage. He can be contacted at ascuthbertson1957@gmail.com . Andrew also has books for sale on his time at Mary Kathleen and in Mongolia, which I'll review at a later date. Please contact for prices and shipping.

Let the Newsletter Editor know if you'd like to notify members of a forthcoming book.

New book notifications are also on the AMHA website https://www.mininghistory.asn.au/books/.

Anyone want to write a review of one for the website, the Journal, or the Newsletter?
Don't forget to also let Mel Davies know about new publications so he can keep up to date the AMHA's *Bibliography of the Mining History of Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea*. Email Mel at mel.davies@uwa.edu.au

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

A reminder to pay for membership via https://amha.tidyhq.com/
The Membership year will be on a rolling 12 month basis not tied to ending on the 31 December as previously.
Notices for the renewal of membership will automatically be sent out prior to the 12 month anniversary of the joining or last renewal date of membership.
Membership Fees:
Full memberships $50
Joint Family Membership $60
Unwaged Student $15
Institutions: $65
Overseas members:
Please add $A10 to the above to cover journal postage costs and an additional $15 if paying by overseas cheque so we can cover bank charges.
Note: a copy of the annual volume of JAMH is included in the fee for all memberships.
Please only pay the current year's fee as subscription rates may change.
To renew or become a new Member go to https://amha.tidyhq.com/ and follow the instructions below.

Renewing Members:

Click on the green 'Log On' box at the top right of the page to log in with email and password.
If you have not logged in previously, enter your email and the system will ask you to create a password.
Once logged in you will see "Memberships" at the top of the page. Click this and you will be taken to your personal membership information page.
Here you will be able to renew online using the secure credit card payment system. You can also correct or add to your personal details.
If you wish to pay by EFT or cheque, email treasurer.amha@mail.tidyhq.com for further information.

New Members:

When you arrive at https://amha.tidyhq.com/ scroll down to the Membership page and chose your Membership type.
Follow the prompts and complete the Membership information and pay using the secure credit card payment system and you will be automatically joined.

If paying by direct bank transfer please make sure you enter your given name and surname as a reference, and also email or mail your membership/registration form showing your preferences for type of membership etc. For account details for direct bank transfer or mailing address for cheques, contact the Treasurer at the email address provided above.
Member subscription payments from outside Australia should be by credit card to avoid excessive bank fees.

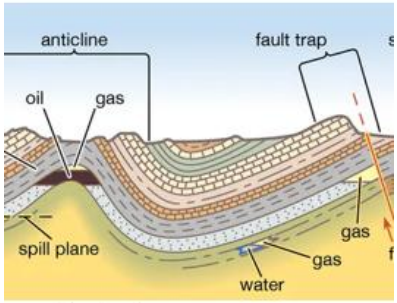
CURRENT AMHA COMMITTEE

President Geoff Hudson
Vice-president Wendy Carter
Secretary Geoff Anderson
Treasurer Ross Both
Membership secretary Bev Phelts

ADVISORY COMMITTEE, appointed
NSW - Robert Turner & Stephen Shortis
SA - Anne Both & Jim Jago
WA – Mel Davies & Wendy Carter
Qld – Ruth Kerr & Rob Barnes
Tasmania – Nic Haygarth & Greg Drew
ACT – Jeff Nixon
NT – Bev Phelts & David Carment
Victoria – Matthew Churchward & Geoff Anderson
New Zealand - Bob Braithwaite
Journal editor: Lyndon Megarrity
Website administration: Stephen Imrie, Jenny Scott
Newsletter editor: Jan Wegner

Facebook co-ordinator: Rob Barnes
Early Career representative: VACANT

JUST FOR FUN
Got your groans ready?



Geological trap

Geologist trap

How to argue in History

How to look when arguing as a historian

PHOTO TIME

"Happy Thought" Syndicate prospecting party, 1895, Mt Margaret (Coolgardie field). Photographer: Roy Miller. http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-140702828

Prospectors in the desert were a tough bunch – braving heat, lack of surface water, isolation from medical aid and stores – and camels! Fortunately this party was sensible enough to bring an 'Afghan' (from what's now Pakistan) to deal with those grumpy beasts. The party was successful, reporting in April that they had found two gold-bearing reefs and brought back around 50 pounds of rich specimens. They ran out of stores and had to return to Coolgardie, but they pegged the reefs and registered their claims. I can't find anything more about them so if any W.A. historians know, I'll put it in the next newsletter.

Lots more great mining and mining town photos on our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/groups/720189911426071/

Australasian Mining History Association Privacy Policy

The Australasian Mining History Association (AMHA) respects the privacy of its members and is committed to protecting their personal information. This privacy policy details how AMHA manages members' personal information and safeguards their privacy.

The National Privacy Principles

From 21 December 2001 it has been obligatory for private sector organisations to manage personal information relating to individuals in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* (*Commonwealth*) and the National Privacy Principles (NPPs). AMHA has chosen to implement a privacy policy that is reflective of the National Privacy Policy Principles (NPPs) as a form of best practice in the management of membership information.

Collection of personal information

AMHA only collects personal information which is necessary to perform the objectives of the Association, namely to:

- promote and co-ordinate national activities and programmes related to mining history;
- encourage the study, discussion, writing and publication of mining history;
- encourage the identification and preservation of records, sites, relics and materials relevant to Australasian mining;
- act as a focus for correspondence between those persons within Australasia and elsewhere interested in mining history; and
- disseminate information of interest to members through a website, newsletter and/or journal.

The Association receives information including name, address, telephone, email and facsimile contact details from members and non-members on membership applications, membership renewal forms and conference registrations. AMHA maintains and uses this information in written and/or electronic form.

Website

The AMHA may collect some information from you when you use our website www.mininghistory.asn.au. Your use of the facilities and services available through our website will determine the amount and type of information which we collect about you. The only personal information the AMHA collects about you when you use our website is what you tell us about yourself, for example, by completing an online form when you complete a questionnaire. As with most websites we do track usage. Each time you visit our website a web server makes a record of your visit. It records your date of visit and the pages accessed and documents downloaded.

Use of personal information

Personal information collected by AMHA is essential to its organisational activities and is used for:

- managing membership and membership renewals
- fulfilling subscription requests and member services
- registrations for conference
- organising conferences
- distribution of publications
- notifying AMHA members via the website, regular mail or email about important news and announcements.

Normal communication with members will be conducted using the email address provided in the membership application/renewal form, unless a request is made to use a different email address.

Disclosure of personal information

Information collected by AMHA will only be used for the purposes for which it was collected or to provide members with additional information about the Associations services. AMHA does not share or sell membership information to third parties.

Access to personal information

Members may request access to their personal information held by AMHA. Requests will be responded to as quickly as possible. Members may request to be removed from the mailing list at any time. Members wishing to access their personal information or to raise a query or make a complaint about AMHA's use of their personal information should contact the Secretary.