



# AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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### EDITORIAL

The editorial by our President, Ken McQueen, brings up an issue that has only been peripherally touched upon in our deliberations to date. A deserving area for all mining historians who are interested in preserving certain aspects of the past and which will hopefully stimulate a response from our readers.'

#### *From the President*

By the time you receive this issue of the Newsletter it will be a new year! I hope you all had a relaxing Christmas and holiday break and that you are looking forward to a great year in 2017.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the AMHA conference in Cobar a successful and enjoyable event in 2016. An interesting issue raised at the conference was the need to better communicate with, and advise the mining industry, government agencies and the general public of the heritage importance of key mining sites and items. This issue partly arose following our visit to the Mount Boppy gold mine, where it was discovered that the last remaining component (a Pachuca) of the first Carbon in Pulp gold extraction plant constructed in Australia had been recently sold for scrap.

One of the three key objectives of the AMHA is to 'encourage the identification and preservation of records,

sites, relics and materials relevant to Australian mining'. To this end there was discussion about setting up an AMHA register of key mining heritage sites and items. Many of our members would be familiar with such sites and could provide suitable information for a register. This register would supplement and extend the existing lists such as the local government, state/territory and National Heritage lists, which record a small number of mining heritage sites. The AMHA Mining Heritage Register could provide the basis for developing applications for the National Heritage list and also provide an advisory resource for government, industry and development agencies.

To move this forward I suggest that the AMHA could establish a small Mining Heritage Group to develop a register and act as a conduit for information. If anyone would like to help develop or join such a group, expressions of interest can be sent to Mel Davies or myself for consideration of this proposal by the AMHA Advisory Committee.

Best wishes

*Ken McQueen President*

### Cobar Conference Report

Following on from the President's mention of the Cobar Conference, it's pleasing to note that the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual

conference under the theme 'Building on the Mining Past', which was run under Ken's keen eye for detail, was voted a resounding success by all who attended.

The business sections attracted 23 presentations including keynote addresses by Sandra Close and Ken McQueen. There were excellent presentations from our two student travel grant winners, Meg Adams and Juanita Kwok. Additional features included a poster session, map displays and a book launch of 'The Second Rush, Mining and the Transformation of Australia' by David Lee. There was also a joint evening event with the local branch of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, where Philip Payton presented a special invited lecture on the Cornish in Cobar. (Extended abstracts of all presentations can be found on our webpage).

Ken McQueen who has extensive knowledge of the geology and mining in the area provided a fascinating in-depth overview of local mining activities. Together with local identities and mining company personnel, he led visits to a number of mining and cultural heritage sites that presented a picture of past activities and developments in the area.

The field trip program included visits to the Mt Boppy gold mine, the more recent McKinnons gold mine and the Mt Grenfell aboriginal rock paintings site. Local tours included the impressive Great Cobar Heritage museum and adjacent ruins of the Great Cobar copper mine, as well as the operating CSA and Peak mines. There was also a post-conference whole day trip to Nymagee-Hera. Altogether a variety mix that kept people on their toes, engaged and informed.

With excellent conference facilities at the Cobar Golf Club there was also the usual social interaction culminating in the conference dinner held on the Thursday night. This was enlivened by an inspiring welcome speech by the dynamic humorous and long-serving Mayor of Cobar, Mrs Lillian Brady OAM, and the entertaining folksongs presented by Danny Spooner.

Barry McGowan, who also contributed his dulcet tones to the entertainment, once more took out the prestigious Brake-Shoe Trophy for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time – on this occasion for his forgetfulness in being unable to find the tank-sized object in his wardrobe. David Branagan, the oldest member present, who had earlier in the week presented an interesting paper on 'Edward Pigot, S.J.: measuring earth tides at Cobar: A long and sorry failure', was the unanimous recipient of the 'Coathanger Award', this being for his sartorial dress, that included a pair of boots held together with sellotape and string. A fine example to us all.

Overall, an excellent week that reflected the great camaraderie that has become a leading feature of our annual conferences.

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**AMHA 23rd Annual Conference, Traralgon, Victoria, 25-29 September 2017.**

Preparations are well under way for the above annual conference, so make a note in your diaries for what looks like another interesting conference and tours. The business sessions will be held at the Churchill Campus of the Federation University, Northways Road, Churchill, which is located about 20km from Traralgon. There is a plentiful supply of accommodation in Traralgon and a number of tours, including pre and possibly post-conference tours, are under consideration. For more detailed information **see the Traralgon flier on our webpage**. Registration forms will probably be on the webpage sometime in February.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> National Folklore Conference 2017**

The annual conference of the Australian Folklore Association, which contains sections on Mining, will take place at the national Library of Australia, Canberra, on 13 April 2017. Building on previous National Folklore Conferences since 2006, the Australian Folklore Network, the National Library of Australia and the National Folk Festival again host this one-

day conference immediately before the National Folk Festival.

The conference should be of interest to anyone involved in collecting, researching, archiving, performing and facilitating folklore in all its many varieties and is a prelude to the National Folk Festival, which also includes a stream of presentations and performances relevant to folklore research.

For further information contact Professor Graham Seal, Director Australia-Asia-Pacific-Institute Research and Graduate Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University, at: [g.seal@curtin.edu.au](mailto:g.seal@curtin.edu.au)

## **PUBLICATIONS**

### **Cobar DVD's**

We have available DVD copies of paper presentations presented at the Cobar conference. If interested in obtaining a copy please send \$6 to the Secretary

Also available are printed copies of the 'Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference Cobar: "Building on Mining Past"'. This contains the conference abstracts and detailed descriptions of mining sites in the Cobar region, including coloured maps and photographs. If interested in obtaining a copy, please send \$10 to the Secretary.

## **BOOK SALE**

Keith Bailey, who attended the Conference in South Australia's 'Copper Triangle' some years ago, has for sale some remainders of his book on the history of the Wallaroo Mines Copper Mine, *James Boor's Bonanza*, 2002. These are going for the bargain price of \$20 plus \$5 postage. If interested you can contact Keith at: 17 Hay Street, Kadina, SA 5554, or email at: [pecun83@bigpond.com](mailto:pecun83@bigpond.com) ; or phone 08 8821 1924.

## **HERITAGE REQUESTS**

We have recently received requests for help to preserve two mining heritage sites that are in danger of being removed:

1) A request from communities in the Flinders area to petition the South Australian Government and 'Flinders

Power' to preserve heritage infrastructure at the Leigh Creek Coalmine site. There are plans afoot to turn the heritage equipment, etc. to scrap. See details and a petition at the following address:

<http://www.communityrun.org/petitions/save-the-leigh-creek-coal-monuments-1>

see, also:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-12-07/historic-coal-mining-dragline-worth-more-as-tourist-attraction/8097216>

2) An approach by Miles Pierce FIE Aust., Committee member of Engineering Heritage Victoria, to help preserve remnants of the Lakes Entrance Oil Shaft, (see article by Jim Enever ' "Mining for Oil in Victoria": The Lakes entrance Oil Shaft', *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, vol. 8, September 2010, pp. 63-87). The site is in danger of a redevelopment but as Jim says: 'Ideally and in the longer term, I believe that the surface remnants should be protected in a publicly accessible reserve with some good on-site interpretation about this unusual mining venture'.

The Association will be sending a letter to the Lakes Entrance Shire to show our concern and to seek support from the Shire to preserve the features under threat.

## **HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE**

At a gala dinner held on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at the Glasshouse, Victoria, and partnered with the International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC), the Australian Prospectors & Miners' Hall of Fame inducted new members into various categories of honour. Into the category of 'Entrepreneurs and Promoters' was Sir Leslie Charles Thiess CBE in recognition for his contribution to the Australian coal industry, pioneering coal exports to Japan from operations in the Bowen Basin in the 1960's and laying the foundations for successful trade operations between Australian and Japan.

## **BITS & PIECES**

### **A few mind-boggling statistics**

While the cost of infrastructure for mining projects can be enormous, making one wonder how such costs can possibly be covered, a few statistics from the INPEX-

operated Ichthys LNG Pro-continuous operation in the Browse Basin off the northwest Western Australian coast gives some idea of the costs involved. The example involves only part of the project, that of the offshore pre-lay of the 77 chain and cable mooring system in the Browse Basin, located off the northern coast of Western Australia.

As part of the mooring system, 49 chains were laid on the seabed in water depths of up to 250 metres and anchored to foundation piles—5.5 metres in diameter and 63 metres long. The system was used to secure the Projects two massive offshore facilities for central Processing, and for Storage and Offloading respectively. The mooring system involved the supply of more than 40,000 tonnes of large scale anchor chains with each chain link weighing more than 700kgs, representing nearly 18 months of worldwide chain production.

In addition to the mooring system more than 16,000 tonnes of subsea structures and 140km of rigid flowlines were installed across Ichihy's Field to safely extract gas and condensate.

The mind boggles at the cost and complexity of providing such infrastructure. (Information taken from: 'Ichthys LNG project mooring system pre-lay completed', *Digging & Drilling Australasia*, November 2016 - January 2017, Issue 17, pp. 29-30).

### **A National Rock Garden for Australia**

Another piece of interesting information, especially for hammer wielding geologists, from the pen of our President:

'In 2010 the Geological Society of Australia initiated the plan for a National Rock Garden to highlight and celebrate the rich geological heritage of Australia. A 5-hectare site was secured on the western shore of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, below the National Arboretum and with views to Black Mountain and across the lake to the heart of the national capital.

The aim of the National Rock Garden (NRG) is to demonstrate the diversity of rocks and minerals that contribute

significantly to the nation's landscapes, culture and prosperity. The site will be of national significance with unique educational and recreational value, particularly for school groups as well as the general public. No other country has a national rock garden, making our National Rock Garden for a whole continent a world first.

The importance of mining to the development and prosperity of Australia will be a theme of interest to AMHA members. The Steering Committee of the NRG is keen to receive suggestions and support (including donations) to bring the vision to reality. For more information on the NRG check the website at: <http://www.nationalrockgarden.org.au/>

### **JOURNAL**

You will have received volume 14 of the Journal through the mail by now, though looking at the postmarks on some of my mail through the recently 'improved and more efficient' Australian Post, I do wonder! But talk of vol. 14 is now history, and what I now look forward to is receiving papers for publication in volume 15 that is planned to be published in October 2017. If you have something for publication in either the refereed or un-refereed sections then please submit sooner rather than later.

### **Good News**

Further to our concerns on the use of Trove in the last newsletter, we have now learned that the Federal Government has announced funding of \$16.4 million to the National Library of Australia to support Trove over the next 4 years. Apparently Trove currently gets 57,000 hits a day and each year has 20 million unique users from Australia and around the world. See the following:

<https://www.alia.org.au/news/14990/good-news-trove-myefo>

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 2016 AGM of the Association took place at the Cobar Golf Club, Cobar on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October. All went smoothly with some time allotted to the question of who will take over when the

Secretary/Treasurer/Journal Editor, either departs this mortal coil, or retires into obscurity? Nothing concrete emerged but at least the seeds have been well sown and post the conference there was an offer to 'understudy' the editorship.

Other than that, one item discussed was whether we should attempt to combine future conferences with groups with similar interest, thus, the Earth Sciences Group and the Australasian Institute of Geoscientists were mentioned as likely candidates.

Thanks were given to Rob Barnes and our Webmaster Stephen Imrie for initiating the AMHA Facebook page in an attempt to improve communication between members. However, as explained, while the page was receiving a great deal of attention, the number of outsiders greatly exceeded the number of current members who utilised the page. Thus a plea emerged for members to consider signing on to the Facebook page.

One recommendation from Ken McQueen and the Advisory Committee was adopted with respect to the journal. This was to offer a choice to members of receiving digital copy of the Journal and a printed copy, or of receiving only a digital or a printed version, or both a digital and printed copy (this choice will be included in the 2017 registration details). To raise the profile of the Association it was also agreed to allow a degree of free public access to the Journal after five years. It was believed this would encourage and increase membership as well as to broadcast the activities and research carried out by members to a wide audience. While articles could already be downloaded from arrangements with RMIT, Melbourne, and through EBSCO pages, it was agreed that attempts should be made to place our Journal articles on other search engines.

With respect to future conferences, it was decided that the offer of Lloyd Carpenter to organise the 2018 conference in Cromwell, New Zealand, should be accepted. Because of climate considerations, it was agreed that a date

late in the year would be the most appropriate, so as to cater for the warm weather addicts from the other side of the Tasman.

There were few changes when it came to the election of officers and the committee, with the only notable change being the retirement of President Ross Both and election in his place of our new Feuhrer, Ken McQueen. In turn, Nic Haygarth replaced Ken as Vice-President.

**Patron:** Prof. Geoffrey Blainey, AC

**President:** Prof. Ken McQueen

**Vice President:** Dr. Nic Haygarth

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Mel Davies, OAM

**Auditor:** Dr Harjinder Singh, FCPA, CPA.

#### **Committee:**

**ACT** Aert Driessen & Dr. Barry McGowan.

**SA** Dr Peter Bell, Dr Brian Hill, Dr Ross Both

**NSW** Prof Adrian Hutton & Greg Knapman

**NT** Prof. David Carment and Dr Bev Phelts

**QLD** Dr. Ruth Kerr, OAM & Dr. Jan Wegner

**VIC** Nick Williams and Dr Mike Williams.

**TAS** Greg Dickens\*

**WA** Wendy Carter & Howard Tew

**NZ** Dr Lloyd Carpenter & Dr Philip Hart

**Journal Editor,** Mel Davies

**Assistant Journal Editor:** Nick Williams

**Webmaster:** Stephen Imrie

\* nominations for another Tassie member welcomed.

#### **MEMBERSHIPS 2017**

Just a reminder that membership renewals will be due in January. Early registrations appreciated. See attached Registration form, but to repeat last year's comment – using 'Register Now' on-line payments would be preferred. <https://www.registernow.com.au/secure/Register.aspx?E=23743>

#### **SEASONS GREETINGS**

Compliments of the Season to all members and supporters: Hope you had a Merry Christmas (and took it easy on the pop and the turkey!) - and to everyone, a Happy New Year.



MJD/December 2016