



# AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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## Newsletter No. 2 JUNE 2018

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ISSUE 93

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**AHA Annual Conference, 'The Scale of History' ANU, Canberra, 2 - 6 July 2018.**

A number of our members will be participating among a cast of thousands at the AHA's Annual conference, thus giving us the opportunity of spreading the good word about the AMHA. They will be making their presentations in a stream labelled as 'Mining Technology and the Environment'. Thanks go to Barry McGowan for organizing and coordinating the venture, which will involve the following members and their papers:

**Robert Ashley**; 'Philip Davies, The Californian hydraulic nozzle and the Kiandra Gold Mining Company'.

**Wendy Carter**, Two prospectors, two generations in the search for gold'.

**Matthew Churchward & Peter Quinn**, 'Sluicing for gold below Bellhopper Hill: Examining a distinctive Victorian Mining landscape'.

**Leonie Knapman**, 'Oil Shale mining in Australia'.

**Barry McGowan**, 'Chinese Miners on the Braidwood and Central West Goldfields NSW'.

**Robin McLachlan**, 'Australian miners response to Klondike Goldfields

regulators. Bureaucrats and corruption, 1897-99'.

**Ken McQueen**, 'Scale and Style in the history of mineral discovery and development'.

For further information on the conference see: <https://www.theaha.org.au/aha-conference-2018-the-scale-of-history/>

**AMHA 24th Annual Conference, 'Rivers of Gold', Cromwell, New Zealand, 7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018.**

Registrations have started to come in for our 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, but those who intend to register are urged to do so soon, so as to help the organisers to better plan the programme. While the 'Early Bird registration cutoff has already passed, you will find the registration fees to be very reasonable when compared with conference run by other societies.

Registration and other details will be found on our webpage at:

<http://www.mininghistory.asn.au/next-conference/> or you can contact Register Now' directly on-line at:

<https://www.registernow.com.au/secure/Register.aspx?E=30010>

**As a happy hint:** when registering on-line with 'Register Now' copy the following onto your search engine: and ensure that when you come to the section on telephone contacts, you click on the triangle that provides a drop box that

gives a list of countries. As the conference is being held in New Zealand this is the current setting, so you'll need to click on your own country if you live elsewhere.

We also appeal for abstracts to be forwarded using the template available at <http://www.mininghistory.asn.au> Again, the abstracts should be emailed to the Secretary to reach him by 1<sup>st</sup> August at the latest.

Authors are also asked to submit a short autobiography (maximum 200 words), to be printed in the conference proceedings. Bios should be on a separate A4 document, using Times New Roman font, body text 12 point, headings 14 point. Borders should be set to 2.0cm on top, bottom and right, and 2.5cm on the left.

Presenters should aim to speak for 20minute, followed by 5 minutes for questions. Time limits will be enforced.

Those who wish to exhibit their work but who prefer not to deliver papers are encouraged to submit abstracts for poster presentations.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

**Robert Porter, *Below the Sands: The Companies that Formed Iluka Resources*. UWA Publishing, Perth, WA, pp. 388. 115 images, 6 maps, 8 appendices (limited print run), 2018. ISBN 978-1-74258-980-0. Price A\$45. For overseas prices see the order form.**

Our members appear to be particularly active in the line of publishing, as shown by Robert Porter's recent addition to the list with the above offering.

The book charts the formation of Iluka Resources in 1968, through the amalgamation of the lineage of two streams of companies: Consolidated Goldfields Australia (CGFA) and then Renison Goldfields Consolidated (RGC), with Westralian Sands.

In turn, RGC, a diversified mining company with a spread of investments, was formed from CGFA, an offshoot of the British mining house, Gold Fields that traced its origin to 1887 and its formation by Cecil Rhodes. CGFA invested broadly,

including in a mineral novel to the British group - beach or mineral sands.

Westralian Sands had humbler origins, formed as Westralian Oil by entrepreneurs in 1954 who hoped to take advantage of the share market frenzy for oil. Oil was not found. Instead, the company encountered mineral sands and went on to produce in Western Australia, locating adjacent to its CGFA controlled neighbour, Western Titanium.

The book conveys the complex and intriguing history of both sets of companies, including the events in London, which led RGC to have corporate raider, Hanson Plc as its major shareholder. Westralian Sands approached Hanson in London, to suggest an aggregation of the two companies. A merger by scheme arrangement occurred in 1998, and Iliuka was formed. 'The small fish swallowed the whale'. The book explores both the lead up and the post-acquisition period of these events to 2015.

For a copy of the order form, contact [anrporter@inet.net.au](mailto:anrporter@inet.net.au), or the AMHA Secretary at [mel.davies@uwa.edu.au](mailto:mel.davies@uwa.edu.au)

**Lyndon Megarrity, *Northern Territory Northern Dreams: The Politics of Northern Development in Australia*, Imprint: Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2018, PB, ISBN: 9781925801187.**

Member Lyndon Megarrity has just had published a book on Northern Australia that among other facets of political history, contains information on mining. A synopsis of the contests is given below:

'The Northern Territory is rediscovered by each new generation of Australian politicians. Dams, mines, large transport projects, a food bowl for Asia and many other projects are promised and sometimes delivered, but then the political momentum falls away and the focus of attention turns to other issues, What is often missing in discussion is the region's long history of nation-building initiatives and proposals, stretching back to 1901. Without this knowledge we are likely to repeat the mistakes of the past.

*Northern Dreams* brings to life the passionate arguments about Northern Australia's national significance and analyses the political debates that have periodically drawn the public's attention northwards. It also highlights the role that Australian politicians such as Gough Whitlam, Ben Chifley, Robert Menzies and Bob Hawke played in shaping northern development policies to suit their times. *Northern Dreams* is the definitive history of the politics of northern development in Australia'.

The publication can be ordered at:  
<http://scholarly.info/book619/>

***Hugh Anderson (Ed.), Strength in Battle: the Memoirs of Joseph Anderson Panton Goldfields' Commissioner and Magistrate, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2018, ISBN: 978-1-925588-88-0 PB; ISBN: 978-1-925588-94-1 HB.***

Members, especially those interested in the Victorian goldrushes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, might be interested in the above recent publication from Scholarly Publishing, which provides some interesting views on the functioning of the administration on the goldfields as seen through the eyes of one of the administrators:. As noted in the publisher's flier:

'The Victorian gold rushes attracted punctilious worthies and sharp operators, but rarely were these characters fused as in the personality of Joseph Anderson Panton, high-minded pillar of society as well as scourge of poor miners and political foes. Panton's previously unpublished memoirs trace vividly his strange career as itinerant dignitary, severe commissioner and magistrate, vigneron, pastoralist and painter, revealing new and surprising aspects of colonial social life'.

### **HELP WANTED**

Member Tully Richards has become involved with a venture to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of mining at Cargo, NSW, where a goldrush involving over

500 miners occurred in 1868. Today, Cargo, located 35km south-west of Orange, has a population of about 250, and there is much interest among the community to write up a history of the area and its mining activities. Some interest has also been shown by government authorities to help finance the venture, but what they would appreciate from our members is information that can be used to meet the publication goal. If anyone has information, or has an interest in helping research the history, please contact Mrs Paula Dell-McCumstie at: Tel. 0419-966-274, or by email at: [pdellmccumst@fmgl.com.au](mailto:pdellmccumst@fmgl.com.au)

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

Members will be pleased to know that our popular Ukelele wielding member, **Barry McGowan** was recently invested in the Queen's Birthday Honours list with the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for 'Services to Community History'. Barry has been a faithful and active member of the AMHA for many years, and has an impressive publication record that is heavily related to mining history. His current research specialty is on the role of Chinese involvement in Australian mining. Hopefully the award will spur Barry into producing even more publications, stimulate his larynx to produce with soothing songs, and help him perfect his famed soft-shoe shuffle, so as to help liven up proceedings at our annual conferences.

### **BITS & PIECES**

#### **American Diggers' Cottages**

Ray Boyle who requested information on 'American Diggers' Cottages', in Newsletter 92, No. 1, 2018, wishes to thank all those who replied. As a result he now has a place for a footnote in a paper he is writing. He especially mentioned Peter Maciulaitis as providing information, and some members might remember Peter as being one of the US attendees at the Waihi Conference, and from attendances and presentation at various International Mining History Conferences. While there is no definitive

information on the source of the buildings, there appear to have been a number of suppliers both within Australia and overseas for those prefabricated buildings. As Ray states:

‘There is no mention from American mining history sources just what an “American diggers' cottage” was but Peter has provided me with interesting references to the supply of prefabricated cottages. He references such sites as Miles Lewis, ‘The diagnosis of prefabricated buildings’ in *Australian Historical Archaeology*, 3, 1985; in Peter Bell, 1984, ‘Timber and iron: houses in North Queensland mining settlements, 1861-1920’, University of Queensland Press, and in ‘A Study of Early Corrugated Iron Buildings in Rural Scotland’ which says: ‘Bellhouse sent cottages and warehouses to California in the 1849 goldrush, and later to Australia in the goldrush of 1851’. The latter site notes provision of some prefabricated buildings that consisted of iron panels fixed to a wooden framework, ... before being exported’. Ray states he is inclined to accept that Macartney’s ‘diggers cottages’ fitted this description and, given the respective sites show the timber structures were clearly marked for re-erection, this may be the type of structure employed by J.A. McCartney. We will never have a more definitive answer’.

### **Coober Pedy Historical Society**

The following extract on the Coober Pedy Historical Society, which is taken from the Australian Societies April Newsletter, provides information on the Society, which, as will be obvious to members, has strong associations with opal mining. It also illustrates how a small but dedicated group of individuals can, with enthusiasm, preserve the history of a community. Something that is probably true of many such organisations in Australia.

The Society was inaugurated in 1989 and has been actively collecting the local history for over 30 years.

The initial impulse for the Society came from two Adelaide historians Ian and Kath Crilly who came to Coober Pedy in 1989 to work on historical displays. Local businesses seeing the potential for cultural tourism established museums: Umoona Opal Mine and Museum; Old Timers Mine and Museum and Desert Cave. Story telling always an important feature of social life in Coober Pedy underscored this focus on history for tourism. Since its inauguration, the Society has built up a collection [of] over 4,000 documents and photos about the lives and work of miners and other residents of Coober Pedy from the first documented discovery of opal in 1915 to the present day. Overall the CPHS collection provides a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of opal mining, Coober Pedy’s context as a remote Australian town and the ongoing development of the community. The collection has been recognized by the National Library of Australia as being of national significance (Significance Assessment 2013).

Lack of a permanent home for meetings and storage has been an ongoing issue. Recently the Society accepted an offer of free use of an underground room made by Umoona Mine & Museum. There is room to store the archives in secure, climate controlled, pest free and dust free environment with enough space for one or two people to work ...[while the] Society meets in the Community Library. Due to financial constraints no monetary support is provided by the Coober Pedy District Council, instead income is generated from book sales and grants along with in-kind donations from local businesses. One of these books *The boy who found opal: the story of Will Hutchison* by Sue Britt describes how the 15-year-old Will Hutchison found the first gemstones in the area. A second book *Images of Coober Pedy 1915-2015* by Jenny Davison and Judy Underwood illustrates the history of the town’s development through 100 years of photos. A self-drive Heritage Trail of the Coober-Pedy area has also been developed with



pamphlets available at the Visitors Centre and tourism outlets around town.

Nic Kingma (chairperson), Jenny Davison (Secretary) and Sue Britt (Treasurer) consider the collection as belonging to the town and see themselves as custodians. Copies of images and documents are made freely available to people in the town with a cost for those outside the town. The Society has successfully applied for grants – for preserving and managing the collection (Preservation Needs Assessment in 2014, a Conservation Activities and Collection Management in 2016) and for developing an oral history archive (a grant from the Oral History Association of Australia grant in 2013 and a Department for Communities and Social Inclusion grant in 2015).

The CPHS is run by volunteers and has 15 local members. Sue Britt outlined some of the challenges facing this small but vibrant historical society. Maintaining the collections database and keeping up to date with developments in digital media is difficult with no local IT specialist support. Digital catalogues spread across various databases are currently being compiled into one web based catalogue system. The FAHS History Clinic has recently assisted in setting up a pilot collection site in eHive showcasing a few key items from the collection:

<https://ehive.com/collections/7823/coober-pedy-historical-society>

The CPHS actively exhibits collection materials with a permanent display at the Council Visitor Information Centre and temporary exhibitions throughout the year. A display about Minnie Berrington (a woman opal miner in Cobar Pedy) was held at the Gem Trade Show during Easter and other displays were held at the Opal Festival in June and the Coober Pedy races later in the year. The Society is once again participating in the South Australian History Festival with a talk on the 29<sup>th</sup> April about the built history of Desert Cave Hotel – the only underground hotel of that type.

The Society further promotes the appreciation of history through history outings presented free of charge to locals and visitors throughout the year. Trips have included the underground churches, old dugouts, water holes, pastoral stations, mining fields, the cemeteries and the solar distillation plant with about 30 to 40 people attending these outings.

For further information Email: [ccooberpedyhs@gmail.com](mailto:ccooberpedyhs@gmail.com)  
Tel. (08) 8672 3714.

### **JOURNAL**

The Editor is still looking for Papers for publication in our next edition of the Journal. Since the last newsletter went out, there has been some response but not nearly enough to keep the Printer busy. If you wish to be lauded as one of the stars of Volume 16, 2018, please consider submitting soon, so as to allow us to get down to the editing process.

As noted in the previous newsletter, early copies of the journal can now be found and downloaded from our webpages. However, please note that spare copies, apart from the out-of-print Vol 1, 2003, are still available in hard copy from the Secretary. Indeed it would be a great relief if people did order these lest they be on my shelf for eternity.

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS**

Yet another appeal to remind you good people to register your memberships for 2018. If you are uncertain as to whether you have joined this year, you can send an email to the Secretary before committing your hard earned pocket money to the AMHA cause. I will soon be sending out reminders but would appreciate if payments could be made before I have to scan the membership listings to find the irresolute!

To register on-line, tapping into 'Register Now' with a simple click on the following address (if you have trouble just copy directly into a search engine.

<https://www.registernow.com.au/secure/Register.aspx?E=28349>

**MJD/June'18**