



# AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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### EDITORIAL

Hitting the headlines at the time of writing is the topic of importing workers from overseas to fill the alleged shortage of Australian workers prepared to move to the wilds of furthest West Australia. Especially noted has been the decision to grant Gina Rinehart access to up to 1,700 workers for her Roy Hill iron-ore development. This of course is not the first time that the suggestion of bringing in foreign workers has raised controversy and members will be well aware of opposition in times long past when Chinese migrants sought opportunities on various gold fields. Again, at the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century questions were raised that led to the banning of Pacific Island workers from entering the Queensland canefields.\*

In the West, there was opposition in the 1920 and '30s to the recruitment of Italian and other European workers to the goldfields that amounted to xenophobia and the odd riot, in a period when the 'White Australia' policy was well and truly supported by most employers and employees in the country as a whole. In the Kimberleys and other areas of the far north of Western Australia, however, there were forces that supported the introduction of Melanesian and other workers. One such supporter was eminent politician Sir Hal Colebatch. In the 1920s, Colebatch had

been the West Australian Minister for the North-West and had campaigned vigorously to settle the hot, humid and thinly populated regions of the north of the State. With there being little likelihood that white settlers would develop this inhospitable environment, he saw this as the only chance to achieve development.

Thus the idea of bringing in overseas workers to the somewhat hot and inhospitable regions is not a new one, but as in the past, the issue is still one which attracts a great deal of opposition. In the long run, of course, opposition breaks down and our history shows that the vast majority of immigrants have remained to make valuable contributions to the economic and social wellbeing of Australia.

There are arguments that Australia should have foreseen the need for skilled and semi-skilled workers before the current mining boom and that there should have been much more emphasis on the training of our own workers. There is much merit in this observation. However, nothing is smooth and recent media attention of the failure to attract workers from the other side of the country to the West shows that even where there are pockets of suitably skilled workers, the process of transferring these across a continent larger than Europe is easier said than done, especially when

facilities for families and appropriate infrastructure such as affordable housing are lacking. This, despite the attraction of large paypackets, shows that the business of migration is a complex issue, perhaps needing more forward planning than is evident in the current 'hot house' development that has hit Western Australia, in particular. Mining historians and demographers of the future will no doubt look back with great interest at this moment in history!

\* One of our members, Lyndon Megarrity has an excellent article on this issue: see, Lyndon Megarrity, ' "White Queensland": The Queensland Government's Ideological Position on the Use of Pacific Island Labourers in the Sugar Sector 1880-1901', in *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-12.

### **JOURNAL – Dearth or Plenty!**

Last year the editor was presented with more papers than could be accommodated. Unfortunately, this year, even with the overflow from those who missed out in Volume 9, there is a situation of drought! This is therefore a plea for people to urgently submit any articles that they think would be acceptable for our journal. There is space for both refereed and un-refereed papers, and any submissions would be greatly appreciated.

*The Ed.*

### **CONFERENCE REPORTS**

#### **9<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress, S. Africa, 17 – 20 April 2012**

*Report 9<sup>th</sup> International Mining History*

*Congress, S Africa 17-20 April 2012-06-15*

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress was recently held in Johannesburg. The Congress was a great success, well organised and very well supported by sponsors, including the two Johannesburg universities, the local mining industry and the National Union of Mine Workers. Highlights included the congress opening by Kgalema Motlanthe, Deputy President of South Africa; congress banquet at the Rand Club; excellent one day field trips to the TauTona gold mine at Carltonville and Sishen iron ore mine; and the post congress field trip to Barberton. The organizing committee led by Peter Alexander, the conference secretariat

masterfully managed by Richard Bailey, and the scientific committee all deserve great credit. A small contingent of Aussies included Ken McQueen, Erik Eklund and Kuntalla Lahiri-Dutt, with other attending AMHA members being Jeremy Mout and Roger Burt.

As mentioned below, in 'future conferences', a bid for Australia to host the 10<sup>th</sup> AMHC in conjunction with the AMHC in Charters Towers in 2014 was successful. Ken McQueen gave a short presentation on the attractions and delights of the venue and there was great interest in the prospect of coming to north Queensland.

*Ken McQueen*

### **Swansea 'Copperopolis' Workshop**

In our December 2011 issue we announced the forthcoming workshop to be held at Swansea University, Wales, in April 2012. The Workshop, one of a series of three to be held in key areas where the 'Swansea' method of smelting was adopted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, proved a great success and among those present and who contributed to the proceedings were members Greg & Lynne Drew, the Secretary, and international members, Roger Burt (UK), Peter Claughton (UK), Philip Payton (UK), Sharron Schwartz (UK), Jeremy Mouat (Canada), and Jay Fell (USA). Jason Shute, who last year presented a paper at the Handhorf conference was also present to read a paper on South Australia's links with Swansea. Other areas discussed had to do with social issues, environmental issues, smelting in Chile, Ireland, and the USA, the role of key entrepreneurial figures and the decline of Swansea following smelting being increasingly undertaken in other countries

The second workshop in the series that's being being organised by Swansea University and supported by the Leverhulme Trust, will be held at **Burra, South Australia**, between the **24<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September 2012**. Any member interested in attending should contact Greg Drew for details and arrangements, at: [gldrew@internode.on.net](mailto:gldrew@internode.on.net)

A third workshop will be held in Chile

in April 2013, and a publication is planned when the project is finalized.

### **FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES**

#### *International Mining History Conference.*

Members will I'm sure be delighted to hear that our bid to promote the 10<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress at Charters Towers in 2014 has been successful. It will be run in conjunction with the AMHA's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. Kett Kennedy who organised our very first conference at James Cook University, Townsville, will again be leading the team, and has already put much work into the planning. When the offer was made at the recent South African Congress, there was widespread support from the international delegates and we expect to see a fair number of visitors fly to Queensland for the event.

#### *18<sup>th</sup> AMHA Annual Conference, Waihi, New Zealand, 4-11 November 2012*

See the enclosed registration form for the Waihi Conference. The New Zealand organizers suggest that because of competing activities at the time of the conference you should book your Waihi accommodation sooner rather than later.

With respect to registering, note that another conference payment option has been opened on-line via '**Register Now**'. Access this via our webpage at <http://www.mininghistory.asn.au> If you wish you may still pay by cheque, but for overseas visitors to Waihi, it will probably be cheaper to use the Register Now system, rather than to use a bank cheque or other method of transferring and changing to New Zealand dollars.

On the registration form you will need to **indicate the time of your arrival in Auckland** if you want road transportation to Waihi, which is about 3hrs 30mins from Auckland by road. Also details of return flights are requested. Pickups will be available at the airport at set times.

Note that the 'Register Now' option will also be available for renewing membership fees later on in the year.

#### *19<sup>th</sup> AMHA Annual Conference, Beechworth, Vic., September/October 2013*

Planning for the Beechworth Conference is progressing. Tours extending to Eldorado, Chiltern, Rutherglen, the Buckland Valley and to the Bethanga copper field plus the Yackanda alluvial gold fields are currently being explored by the local committee.

The theme for the conference is 'Diversity in Mining'. Given the range of mining techniques employed and the mix of minerals worked in the region, the organizing committee regard the theme as appropriate. However, papers reflecting all aspects of mining history will be welcomed, and the committee looks forward to a bumper crop.

The timing of the conference follows AMHA preferences and occurs during a common university break. As this coincides with Victorian school holidays it would be advisable if delegates were to make accommodation bookings sooner rather than later. A range of accommodation is available, including motels, B&B, cottages and some hostel style facilities. A comprehensive list of options will be made available with an information brochure that will be available at the Waihi conference. The organizing committee will not be in a position to make accommodation bookings on the behalf of delegates. The dates for the conference are as follows:

- Saturday 28 September – Pre-conference tour.
- Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Registration, Local tours, Official reception.
- Monday 30<sup>th</sup> to Friday 4 October – Business sessions, except for a mid-conference tour on Wednesday 3 October.
- Saturday 5 October – Post-Conference tour.

For intending tourists and those unfamiliar with the area, four books are suggested as useful pre-reading; Woods, Carole, *Beechworth, a Titan's Field* (1985), Phillips, June, *A Poor Man's Diggings*:

*Mining and Community at Bethanga, Victoria, 1875-1912* (1987), Lloyd, Brian, *Gold in the North East* (2006), and Talbot, Diann, *The Buckland Valley* (2004). There are many others, and of course, local web sites. Hope to see you there,

*Mike Williams (Convenor)*

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Kay Fraser, *A Remarkable Gift: 100 years of the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust*, University of Queensland Press, 2012. Cost \$40.

In recent times there has been much comment in the press about the 'stinginess' of our wealthier members of the community when compared to American philanthropists. It's therefore salutary and a relief to record the contribution of one mining entrepreneur that has survived for a period of 100 years in providing relief for needy persons.

Following the death of Mt Morgan mining magnate Walter Hall in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, his wife Eliza established a Trust fund in his memory. Worth the then enormous sum of £1 million when inaugurated in 1912, the trustees still operate today to assist individuals, to provide tertiary scholarships and to endow charitable organisations such as the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne.

The book provides insight into the functioning of the fund and its trustees over 100 years of activity but also provides background detail on Walter and Eliza. As some of our readers will know, Walter died in 2011 aged 80 years. Born in England, he had arrived in Australia in the mid 1850s with just a few pounds in his pocket but through enterprize he eventually grew to become a wealthy businessman, being involved in the transport industry, pastoral activities, and of course in the Mount Morgan gold mine.

### **'Digging & Drilling Australasia'**

Those members interested in Oil and Gas will be interested to hear of a new publication *Digging & Drilling Australasia*, which will be available in print and on-line. By the time you read this

the first edition will have been published but the editors are interested in getting mining content and invite members to forward any current and interesting mining industry news for consideration. The website for the magazine is: [www.DandDmagazine.com](http://www.DandDmagazine.com), and General Manager Len Fretwell can be contacted at [len.fretwell@DandDmagazine.com](mailto:len.fretwell@DandDmagazine.com) or Tel. 04-1700-1080.

Ross Mainwaring, *Riches beneath the Flat: A history of the Lake George Mine at Captain's Flat*, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Inc., 2012. 104 pp., 62 photographs and diagrams.

ISBN 978 0 909340 49 0 (pbk).

Price \$29.70 + \$6 postage.

Member Ross Mainwaring provides a detailed account of the history of Captains Flat with its gold and base metal production that went on from the 1880s to its final closure in 1963. Ross has tackled this previously lightly researched topic by using newspaper accounts and company records stored in the Noel Butlin Archives of Business and Labour at the Australian National University. He looks at the fluctuations in the fortunes of the mine overtime, the geology and capitalisation of the field, the working conditions, technical problems and solutions. As the Light Railway Research Society handles the publication it comes as no surprise to note that there is special attention and focus on underground and above ground transportation, an area in which Ross is particularly well versed having spent most of his life employed on the railways.

To obtain a copy (with special rates for LRRSA members) contact LRRSA Book Offer, PO Box 21, Surrey Hills, Vic. 3127, or fax or ring 03-9701 8221, or order on line at: [www.lrrsa.org.au](http://www.lrrsa.org.au)

## **BITS & PIECES**

### ***Elevation of the Humble Pasty!***

Members might remember the pride with which Keith Johns and other pasty-eating members of Cornish descent lauded this rather humble delicacy in past correspondence pages of this publication. (See Newsletters, No. 3, Issue 46, 2006 and

No. 3, Issue 84, 2008). Well, I'm sure Keith and all Cornishmen will be delighted to hear that the said delicacy has been elevated to aristocratic levels by revelations exposed in the *Australian*, *The Wall Street Journal* and in leading British newspapers such as *The Times*, under the heading 'Pasty Spat Exposes Upper-Crust Tories'. In this scandalous affair, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, had the temerity to suggest that VAT exemption for hot baked goods should be scrapped. In this attack he specifically mentioned the Cornish pasty and compounded his sin by pointing out that he couldn't remember the last time he'd eaten one. Prime-Minister Cameron the next day announced he had recently purchased one from the Cornwall Pasty Company, though in turn he was crucified for choosing a Company that was 'too posh'. The Labour representatives were quick to suggest that the Conservatives were out of touch with the average Briton, the latter presumably feasting on less exotic fare than did Cameron. Thus the humble pasty once again finds its niche in British history by exposing the class differentials that still exist in society. Keith Johns, yet another tit-bit to put under your belt along with a Cornish pasty!

**P.S.** – On 30 May it was announced in the British Parliament that the pasty had been made exempt from VAT. Another great triumph for meritocracy!

### ***Museum Link, Waihi***

Nick Williams in her never-ending hunt for 'Oertlings' (mostly gold-weighing scales) has tracked a couple down at a museum near Waihi. The location lies near the site of the Waikino Battery, some 8km from Waihi town. Nick was very impressed with their web page and suggests that our members might be interested in opening the page. The address is:

[www.waihimuseum.co.nz](http://www.waihimuseum.co.nz)

### ***Queenstown Exhibition***

Thanks to Ross Both and Gordon Boyce for sending in a one-page article from the *National Trust News* that provides some details on the important contribution of

Robert Sticht to pyritic smelting into Australia when Manager of the Mt Lyell Mine in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While members will know much of the information on Sticht's contribution, especially perhaps from the pages of Geoffrey Blainey's book, *The Peaks of Lyell*, of particular interest will be that the National Trust is currently developing an interpretative exhibition of his contribution in Sticht's old office precinct in Queenstown. The exhibition, supported by the Tasmanian Community Fund, is scheduled to open in October.

### ***Bill O'Neill***

Those many members who remember Bill O'Neill will be pleased to hear that a memorial to Bill has been set up at the Trades Hall in Broken Hill. Partner, Dallas Bartley says she is still combing his memorabilia, and as he was a member of about thirty organisations during his lifetime, there's a lot to get through. Dallas still remains a member and has insisted that Bill's name be kept on the books, especially, she states, as he delighted in attending our conferences and being part of the organisation. Something to be looked forward to is an edited article written by Bill that will be published in the next volume of our journal.

### ***Opening of Museum in Rossmoyne, TAS***

Volke Hahl, one of our keen Tasmanian members writes: 'While a good deal of the activities of members consists in writing erudite articles and books some lesser mortals have been busy in other directions. On the Ben Lomond Tin Field in Tasmania were the Storys Creek and Aberfoyle mines and associated towns. The mines closed 30 years ago, the Storys Creek township has disappeared and Rossarden has dwindled to about 50 residents. Recently, however, some concerned locals decided to set up a small museum in the old school building, many old photos of the towns, communities and mines were gathered along with maps, documents and other items of memorabilia. All this is housed and on display in two classrooms and a porch. The locals have done quite a

good job under the circumstances and it is of interest to both former locals and visitors alike. The largely unadvertised opening attracted about 150 visitors, mainly former residents, some from interstate. Any member, their friends or acquaintances passing through the area should call in for a visit'.

*Volke Hahl*

### CONGRATULATIONS (1)

Member [Ray Boyle](#) was recently the recipient of a medal from the Queensland Division of the Institution of Engineers. The award was in recognition of Ray's sterling service over many years, with the citation reading 'This award recognizes meritorious service by an individual in the pursuit of Engineers Australia's goals in the interest of the profession'. Ray has been a member of the Rockhampton group of the organisation for 52 years and has also been a corresponding member of the Queensland Division Heritage Committee since 1980, and of the National committee since 1990. The AMHA is pleased to hear of this award and congratulates Ray on same.

### CONGRATULATIONS (2)

Congratulations also to [David Branagan](#) who will be the first recipient of the inaugural Tom Vallance medal that will be presented at the International Geological Congress, Brisbane, this coming August. The medal is awarded to recognize people who have made a significant contribution to researching, recording, investigating, documenting and/or publishing about people or places or events of historical importance to the geological sciences in Australia/Australasia. David is a worthy recipient, for as noted in the e.mail *Bulletin* of 18 April, put out by the Earth Sciences History Group, David has 190 publications to his credit, of which some 100 are concerned with history of geology, including his major biography on Professor Edgeworth David. He has also contributed much to education and public interest in geology through his various field guides. His knowledge of the early history of geology in Australia is without equal today

and in a sense he took over where Tom Vallance left off, though it should be noted they did do some joint papers together. He was President of the International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences for four years and is still active in that organization, and will be arranging an historical field excursion for Members prior to the IGC in Brisbane this year. David is indeed a worthy recipient of the first Tom Vallance Medal.

### INFORMATION WANTED

*Kelwilyn Rawson Moure*

Brett Fitzgerald asks whether anyone can furnish information on a family member who was in the Oil/Gas/Coal exploration area at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries?

The person concerned was Dr. Kelwilyn Rawson Moure who was renown for his Drilling and Geological skills. He could also have been known as Kelwyn Moure, K.R. Moure, or even by the name of Edgar Hasler (Brett's Grandmother's Great Uncle).

While he did a lot of Oil/Coal/Gas exploration around Australia, activities during his early life cannot be substantiated. He was apparently born in the USA (Ohio) in 1862 and came to Australia in the very early 1900's. He worked for the Federal Government in Papua New Guinea, around 1913, but took ill soon after joining the service. He had patents to his name and apparently had a mining lease in the Gladstone area. Its also believed he searched for Oil/Coal and Gas around the following areas: Gippsland area (VIC); Southern NSW – in the field of Oaklands (Coorbin); the Gladstone area (QLD); Adelaide area (SA) – Coorong field; somewhere in the Northern Territory; Papua New Guinea; and possibly West Africa.

While Brett has a number of documents to show where Kelwilyn was at certain points of his life, there is something of a mystery about his early period, and it is apparent, that this man known as Kelwilyn Moure isn't who he seems to be. One supposition is that he may have been born in Australia in 1874 under the name of

Edgar Claude Hasler, but there are so many inconsistencies in his life story that Brett would appreciate any light that members might be able to shine on his ancestor. So all you would-be Sherlock Holmes characters out there – should you have any information or suggestions, please contact Brett at: [brettfitz@ozemail.com.au](mailto:brettfitz@ozemail.com.au)

### *Cunninghar Mine, NSW*

In a previous newsletter, (Issue 25, No. 2, June 2001) David Hooker had little luck when asking whether any of our members could furnish information on the activities of his grandfather, Brian Harvey Hodgson Hooker – who managed various mines in NSW, QLD, SA, and WA, New Zealand and Borneo. In that request he specifically asked about his activities at the White Feather and Ivanhoe mines in WA. David has since received documents from London's Kew Gardens Archive that relate to his time at the **Cunninghar Mine**, NSW, in 1886. Much of this details his education at various institutions, his activities as Assayer and involvement with ore-dressing machinery and problems in treating auriferous pyrites. The hardships of mining in this era are reflected in his comments to Dr Hector F.R.S., Wellington,

‘At the present moment I am engaged as Assayer to the Cunninghar Quartz Mining Co. in New South Wales near Murrumburrah at a salary of £4.4 a week; they are trying to smelt auriferous pyrites with lead in a blast furnace, which process ought to succeed. I am fairly satisfied with the place as a start, but would not have a moments hesitation about throwing it up if any better position offered itself, as the place is awfully rough, a regular mining camp in fact, accommodation bad, nearest town 15 miles off and not a book to be got to read anywhere, in fact there is no alternative between working and sleeping’.

If anyone has any information on his grandfather or on the Cunninghar Mine, then David would be delighted to hear from you at:

[dick\\_noelhooker@yahoo.com.au](mailto:dick_noelhooker@yahoo.com.au)

### AMHA OFFICIALS

Is there anyone out there s prepared to take on a job as Assistant Secretary, or of Treasurer? If so, would you put your name forward for consideration prior to the Waihi Conference so that your offer can be considered at the Annual General Meeting? With old age stealthily creeping up, your current Secretary/Treasurer won't be around forever and it would be nice to have someone in the wings prepared at some time in the future to take over the above duties. Any offers appreciated.

### FROM THE AHA NEWSLETTER

The [State Library of NSW](#) David Scott Mitchell Memorial Fellowship and the Merewether Scholarship for 2012 are now accepting applications. The David Scott Mitchell Memorial Fellowship is for the research and writing of Australian history using the Mitchell Library. The Merewether Scholarship is for the research and writing of 19th century NSW history using the Mitchell Library. The closing date for applications is **2 July 2012**.

For further information see:

<http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/awards/index.html>

### DEATH NOTICE

It is with sadness that we report the death of one of our founder members, **Diane Menghetti**, who passed away at her daughter's home in Florida, on 18<sup>th</sup> June, following a long illness. Some time ago, Diane sent us a very stoic letter in which she announced in a very matter-of-fact way that she expected to last only a couple of months. However, she survived for over a year longer than her doctors predicted. Diane contributed a great deal to our organisation and to mining history in general and will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

If you wish to extend your condolences please contact Diane's daughter, Garda at: [Gardajohn@aol.com](mailto:Gardajohn@aol.com) 3204 West Santiago St, Tampa, Florida, 33629 USA. An obituary to Diane will appear in the next newsletter.