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ISSUE 100

EDITORIAL

Welcome to what's shaping up to be a disastrous year (fire, flood, plague, Loo Paper famine...) By now you would know that the cascade of Coronavirus-inspired conference cancellations includes our AMHA meeting at Bathurst.

The AMHA Conference, planned for 9-14 November 2020, was cancelled after consultation with the Organising and the Advisory Committees in consideration of the health of AMHA members, conference registrants and the community. While we would hope that the emergency will have died down by November, because of the uncertainty, and noting that the recovery from the disruption to normal schedules may prevent people from attending in November, this decision has been made reluctantly.

It has been agreed in discussion between the Bathurst and Burra organizing committees that, as planned, the 2021 AMHA Conference will take place at Burra, South Australia, and the 2022 Conference at Bathurst. Thanks to Juanita Kwok and the Bathurst Conference organising committee – we know how much work goes into organising a national conference and we hope not all of your hard work has been wasted.

*International Mining History Congress,
Sudbury, June 2020*

Following the pandemic announcement regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), it will probably come as no surprise to learn that the Executive of the Congress have, with regret, called off the meeting. Two days after the decision was made, it was announced that the administration at Laurention University where the Congress was to take place had ordered the shut down of the University. This was done after it was discovered that a number of people at the University had attended the Prospectors and Developers Conference in Toronto, and that at least one of those attending had tested positive. Jeremy Mouat, who has worked on organizing the Congress over the last few years, extends his apologies to all those who would have liked to attend. He has also announced that he is hoping to persuade the Laurention University to run the event in June 2021.

BITS & PIECES

The Pike River Recovery Agency has received further funding to continue uncovering the drift in the mine where 29 miners lost their lives in an explosion in 2010. The aim is to recover any remains of the miners and gather forensic evidence of the cause of the explosion. See <https://www.pikeriverrecovery.govt.nz/> for updates.

MINING HERITAGE

Before COVID-19 came the bushfires, and inevitably some mining heritage was damaged. Ken McQueen sent this in:

Bushfire Damage to Mining Heritage

Important mining heritage buildings in the historic goldfields of Kiandra in Kosciuszko National Park, southern NSW, have been destroyed in the January bushfires. The Dunns Road fire gutted the historic Kiandra Courthouse and in the surrounding area, the Wolgal Lodge, Pattinsons Hut and Sawyers Hill Rest House were burnt to the ground. Some infrastructure for the Kiandra heritage track was also destroyed. The small stone courthouse included a police quarters and a courtroom. It was designed by NSW Government Architect James Barnet and completed in the 1890s to replace an earlier courthouse, which had been the first substantial building in Kiandra during the 1859-61 gold rush. In the 1950s and 60s the building was modified and extended to be used as a chalet and later, depot for the NSW Department of Main Roads snow clearing operations. Kiandra Courthouse was listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register in 1999.



Historic Kiandra Courthouse, constructed from local basalt. (Photo by Ken McQueen 17/1/2018).

Over the last decade, volunteers and National Parks staff had restored the courthouse and some of the huts (at a cost of more than \$1million) after the devastating 2003 fires.

After the fire:



Photo by Tumut and Adelong Times 18/1/2020.

PUBLICATIONS

Marjorie Theobald, *The Accidental Town: Castlemaine, 1851-1861*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, Vic, 2020, ISBN 978-1-925984-35-4. PB. \$39.95. See link: www.scholarly.info

Written by past member Marjorie Theobald, this well-researched and interesting social history of Castlemaine during its golden years will be available in March.

Castlemaine owes its existence to the alluvial gold rushes which began in 1851. To cope with the crisis, Governor La Trobe established four Gold Commissioners' Camps – at Castlemaine, Bendigo, Ballarat and Beechworth. While many centres of mining dwindled to names on the map, these administrative centres developed into permanent towns. Castlemaine was at first a ramshackle village known as the Canvas Town clustered around the Camp. After the first land sales in 1853 the town began to take shape. The first hotels were licensed in 1853, schools came out of tents and into buildings, the churches built substantial places of worship, administrative functions such as the Post Office and the Court House were moved from the Camp to the town. Local initiative built the Hospital, the Gas Works, the Mechanics Institute and the Benevolent Asylum. Several foundries flourished, servicing the mining industry and the construction of the railway line. Castlemaine was declared a municipality in 1855. The first decade is rich in characters and egos. They were astonishingly young, assertive and determined to shape a better way of life. 'The Accidental Town' recreates an era when

Castlemaine was poised precariously between a mining camp and a settled town.

Philip Payton, *The Cornish Overseas: A History of Cornwall's 'Great Emigration'*. University of Exeter Press, 2020. 527pp, Price £75. ISBN 9781905816101

In this up-dated edition of *The Cornish Overseas*, Philip Payton draws upon almost two decades of additional research undertaken by historians the world over since the first paperback version of this book was published in 2005. It takes

account of numerous new sources to present a comprehensive picture of the Cornish diaspora.

The *Cornish Overseas* begins by identifying some of the classic themes of Cornish emigration history, including Cornwall's 'emigration culture' and 'emigration trade', and goes on to sketch early Cornish settlement in North America and Australia. The book then examines in detail the upsurge in Cornish emigration after 1815, showing how Cornwall became swiftly one of the great emigration regions of Europe.

Discoveries of silver, copper and gold drew Cornish miners to Latin America, while Cornish agriculturalists were attracted to the United States and Canada.

The discoveries of copper in South Australia and in Michigan during the 1840s offered new destinations for the emigrant Cornish, as did the Californian gold rush in 1849 and the Victorian gold rush in Australia in 1851.

The crash of copper-mining in Cornwall in 1866 sped further waves of emigrants to countries as disparate as New Zealand and South Africa. In each of these places the Cornish remained distinctive as 'Cousin Jacks' and 'Cousin Jennys', establishing their own communities and making important contributions to the social, political and economic development of the new worlds.

By 1914, however, Cornwall was no longer the international centre of mining expertise, the mantle having passed to America, Australia and South Africa, and Cornish emigration had dwindled as a result. Nonetheless, the Cornish at

home and abroad remained aware of their global transnational identity, an identity that has been revitalised in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

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JOURNAL

We may not have a conference this year, but Mel is seeking contributions to Vol. 18 of the Journal. So while you're sitting at home to cheat the virus, you can dust off that research you've always wanted to write up, and send articles to Mel at mel.davies@uwa.edu.au.

Papers of about 8,000 words (excluding endnotes) are the ideal, though shorter applications of merit will be considered. If interested, please contact the Editor/Secretary by presenting your paper in in Word, Times Roman 12. For further instructions please view the style sheet on our webpage, or email Mel for a copy.

HELP NEEDED

Ken McQueen has been working hard on updating the AMHA website and is collecting information of use to mining historians so it can be published on the For Members page. Currently he is working on a list of useful online resources. Look for it soon and if you can think of more, let him know.

WEBSITE NEWS

Update on AMHA Website

Work has recently been completed on the AMHA website to fix some outstanding

issues. The site has been transferred from Cloud platform to Cpanel platform, which has made it a little faster. It has also been moved to https protocol, which has encryption and is therefore more secure for users.

When you now access the website you will notice that the **For Members** page is not accessible until you login as a registered user (by clicking on the tab and following the link, top one). Previously due to a glitch, anyone in the world could access this page.

The **For Members** page contains the latest volumes of the Journal and also the latest Newsletters, as well as some other information restricted to members. If, when you renewed your membership you requested digital access to the Journal you should already be registered. Some people have also separately requested registration. To be registered to login to the website, you need to request this. It is illegal to automatically add people to a website where their User Name, Full Name and Email Address are stored, without their permission. We will fix this in the next Membership Renewal form, with a separate request box.

In the meantime if you are **not** already registered and wish to be, or if you are not sure if you are registered or are having problems with your login, contact Ken McQueen at Ken.McQueen@canberra.edu.au.

On a related matter, the Website Administration Group (WAG) is still interested in an additional helper, who would like to assist with managing the website and particularly adding/updating content. Contact Ken McQueen or Mel Davies if you can help. There was zero response to our plea in the previous Newsletter.

WAG is also interested in receiving any comments about the website and particularly suggestions for additional and useful content that can be added to the **For Members** page. Ken McQueen (for WAG)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Reminder from the Treasurer: There are still people, many who are feeling guilty, who he knows are longing to pay their membership registration fees for 2020. If among this number please fill in and return the

membership form attached, or register on-line by clicking on the Register Now link:

<https://www.registernow.com.au/secure/Registrar.aspx?E=37235>

HERITAGE PLACE OF THE MONTH



Iguana Consols winding engine and compressor, Croydon, north Queensland. The shaft was sunk in 1916 with a Government subsidy to search for rich reefs which had been cut off by a fault in the shallow ground. It found orebodies with a little gold, but nothing worth mining. The plant reverted to the Queensland government which is why the site is still reasonably intact. The compressor was made by Thompson and Co., Castlemaine, supplying 12 rock drills, and was imported to Croydon from Charters Towers. The 25 hp winder was made by John Donald & Co., Glasgow, and was brought to Croydon by an English company for the very good reason that John Donald was one of the Directors.

CALL FOR ITEMS

As the new newsletter editor, I'd like to make an appeal for items: historic photos, snippets of mining history, the latest mining heritage place you've visited, any new books, theses, and articles on mining history that you know about. In the meantime – stay well!

Jan Wegner

(Jan is a historian who recently and gleefully retired from lecturing at James Cook University in Cairns. She researches various aspects of Queensland mining history, with an emphasis on heritage mining sites and mining technology.)

