



AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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EDITORIAL

As mining historians we will all be aware of the significant changes that have taken place in mining technology over time. One item that caught my eye brought this into focus recently when *The Australian* (17 July 2012) published a short article on Innovation under the heading 'Rock sorter creates ore sorts of interest'. Being aware of the 19th century methods of assaying copper ores that involved miners and the mine captains making piles of ore that were then halved, quartered, and sampled by taking out 'prills' that were deemed as representing the quality of the ore before they went off to be assayed by a chemist made the latest development all the more interesting, especially as the new method has been estimated to raise copper production efficiency by a massive 20 per cent. This revolutionary technique, comes as a result of investigation by the CSIRO that involves the use of sensors using radio waves to grade chalcopyrite ores. This it is claimed will allow low grade ores to be segregated from higher grade ores, as the radio waves will be able to probe rock piled almost half-a-metre high on a conveyor belt moving at 5metres a second. Conventional equipment then diverts low grade or waste rock. Thus for the first time it will be possible to measure quality of minerals in bulk. It is planned to give a field trial to the

system at one of the mines operated by Newcrest Mining later in the year.

We shall await the results with interest and if the sensor works as well as estimated then it will mark another major innovation in the history of metal recovery. As stated, this will move us far away from the slow and laborious (and sometimes not too accurate) means of assaying and selecting ores of various quality, adopted in our past.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note that the Annual General Meeting will be held at the Memorial Hall, Waihi, New Zealand, on Saturday 10th November, commencing at 3.30pm. Any motions or items for discussion should be sent to reach the Secretary by Friday 19th October.

This year, proxy forms will be sent by mail to all members and we request that these be sent to the New Zealand address at the bottom of that form. The form has to arrive at least two days before the AGM. An addressed envelope will be enclosed with the form (unstamped!) – please make an effort as this will allow you to participate in the governance of the Association. **If not present at the AGM, persons wishing to nominate for positions on the Executive, or the Committee, should communicate with the Secretary before the meeting.**

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Swansea 'Copperopolis' Workshop

The 2nd Workshop of the 'Copperopolis' group, organised by Swansea University to celebrate Swansea, Wales, as the centre of world smelting for much of the 19th century (see last newsletter), took place at Burra, South Australia at the end of September. Papers were presented by a number of international speakers among who were UK members Roger Burt, Philip Payton, and Sharon Schwartz. In addition local members, Peter Bell and Greg Drew presented papers. Greg and Lynne Drew did an excellent job when making the local arrangements that ranged from accommodation to catering, and trips around the heritage areas in the area. The international presence was augmented by a large local component, including many of our South Australian members, the total attendance being in the order of between 50 to 60 persons. All together, a very successful meeting that will help contribute to a publication to be produced after the next and final 'Copperopolis' meeting in Chile in April 2013.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

18th AMHA Annual Conference, Waihi, New Zealand, 4-11 November 2012

Just a few housekeeping points for those lucky enough to be attending our annual conference:

- Those having difficulty in finding accommodation at Coromandel during the two-day tour should try booking at the Coromandel Court Motel.
- Because of space restraints bring only what you have to on the Coromandel trip. But note as a visit to the Broken Hill mine is envisaged then bring clothing suitable for underground. A backpack to carry drinks is also advisable.
- If requiring transport to and from Auckland and Waihi, there are three coaches a day that service the route. Contact on the web: *Intercity Bus Lines Auckland*.
- Re the Waiorongomai walk: All you (hopefully) fit people should arm (or

leg) yourselves with good bush walking boots, a sun hat, parka, backpack to carry a water bottle, lunch, snacks and a small torch. Shorts are also recommended. No snake repellent needed, this, like Ireland, being snakeless, though insect repellent is advised to ward off the sandflies.

Labour Migration in the Asia-Pacific: Race, History and Heritage, February 14-15, 2013

In view of recent debates over migration, and of labour migration to fill mining vacancies in particular, members may be keen to participate in a symposium being put on by the Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts (IPPHA), at the Australian National University, Canberra. If so, details can be found at:

<http://ippha.anu.edu.au>

If wishing to present a paper, an abstract of 200 words should be submitted by 1 November 2012, to Dr Marshall Clark at; marshall.clark@anu.edu.au

Cornish Association of South Australia – Biennial Seminar, Wallaroo 23 May 2013

The seminar will be held as part of the Kernewek Lowender festival. The organisers are making a call for papers on topics related to the Cornish in Australia, or on the Cornish in Cornwall that can illustrate differences or similarities in aspects of life in the various Cornish societies. Abstracts of not more than 250 words should be submitted before 28 October 2012, to Dr. Jan Lokan, PO Box 515, McLaren Vale, SA 5171, e.mail: janlokan@acer.edu.au Registration forms are also available from Jan.

NAMHO Conference - Aberystwyth University, Wales, 28 June to 1 July 2013

The conference on Mining Legacies: examines the impact of historic mineral working and ore processing on land, landscapes and perceptions of place and looking at the multiple legacies of historic mineral extraction. The event offers the opportunity for field visits to relevant mining sites in the Ceredigion uplands.

Over the last four thousand years

mining has left a footprint on the environment, leaving both visible and hidden legacies for today and the future. Evidence of past mineral extraction can be prominent in the landscape as spoil heaps, discharges, dressing floors, mine entrances, derelict buildings, rusting machinery, transport infrastructure and settlements. Other remains are less visible, such as earthworks indicating sub-surface remains and subterranean workings, heavy metal residues, sometimes dating back thousands of years captured in polar ice caps or peat deposits. Less tangible still are the socio-economic, political and cultural impacts of mining, such as in the sense of place and identity, the development of heritage and alternative economic pathways, and the moral dilemmas of current and future mineral exploitation that these historic sites have often provoked and represented over time. Papers are invited on all aspects of the mining legacy.

Investigating, in some cases, rectifying and also promoting the post-industrial landscape can inform our knowledge of mining over the last four millennia. This conference aims to bring together practitioners from a variety of academic disciplines, industry, the public sector, heritage charities, and independent researchers. For further information contact: Dr Peter Cloughton: p.f.cloughton@exeter.ac.uk (01437 532578) or Dr Catherine Mills: c.j.mills@stir.ac.uk (01786 467583)

ICHSTM Congress, Manchester, UK, 22-28 July 2013.

A call is being made for papers to be presented at the ICHSTM Congress in Manchester. The symposia may be of interest to some of our rock wizards, as there will be sessions on Geology in Art, and on Literature and Geologists in the Field. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 15 October 2012. See: <http://conectahistoria.blogspot.com/2012/09/call-for-papers-symposia-on-geology-in.html>

JOURNAL

Its nice to report that there was a good response to the appeal in the previous

newsletter for more papers for forthcoming Vol. 10 of the journal. Members can expect another bumper and interesting edition. In a *The Ed.*

PUBLICATIONS

Erik Eklund, *Mining Towns: Making a Living; Making a Life*, University of New South Wales Press, 2012, 400pp, PB, ISBN 9781742233529. AUD\$49.99 (AUD\$45.45 ex-tax) NZD\$59.99

Member Erik Eklund has just added this publication to his bibliography of published works. The book that should be of interest to our members, for as the cover note accompanying the book says:

‘At any given moment in our history Australia has been in the middle of a mining boom. This timely book is a history of the iconic Australian towns that arose with these booms over a century: Broken Hill, Mount Isa, Queenstown, Mount Morgan, Port Pirie and Kambalda. *Mining Towns* shows the rich cultural and historical legacy these towns helped create as townspeople – those working below the ground and those above – sought to make their lives in them. The current ‘fly-in-fly-out’ mining culture means we may not see the likes of them again, which, as this book shows, will be a great loss’.

Erik will be having a special launch at our forthcoming Waihi Conference, and it will be reviewed in the next volume of our journal.

BITS & PIECES

Olympic Dam – ‘Much Ado about Nothing’ (with apologies to Wm. S.)

This astute piece has been contributed by our ever-vigilant ex-President:

‘On 22 August BHP Billiton announced that their proposed expansion of the Olympic Dam copper-gold-uranium operation was postponed. The South Australian news media went into a frenzy. It declared that the announcement had "dealt a blow to the economy" and the state had "lost" 44 billion dollars. (There was no calculation to explain how the figure was arrived at, nor did they say precisely where all that money was located before it went missing). The *Advertiser* newspaper put out

a special edition with eleven pages on the story. No less an authority than Alexander Downer compared the announcement to the disastrous collapse of the State Bank in 1991. Even ABC News referred to the "moth-balled Olympic Dam expansion". It's puzzling how you could mothball something that doesn't exist yet, but obviously a lot of people thought that something bad had happened. Perhaps the miners have sold their message too well.

Then the blaming started. The State opposition blamed the government; the State government blamed the previous State government; the Federal opposition blamed the carbon tax and the mining tax, although the opposition leader said he hadn't read the company's statement. The next day he said he had read it; he was answering a different question when he said he hadn't. Within 24 hours what the opposition leader said he hadn't said was attracting more media time than Olympic Dam.

In fact, BHP Billiton wouldn't have paid any mining tax, and they said the carbon tax had nothing to do with the announcement. Instead, they pointed to weakening demand for copper in China, falling uranium prices in the wake of the Fukushima reactor disaster, and costs imposed by the high Australian dollar. The words of the company's announcement were that "it will investigate an alternative, less capital-intensive design of the Olympic Dam open-pit expansion, involving new technologies, to substantially improve the economics of the project."

In other words, the media headlines should have read, "Nothing Happened Today". The announcement had no effect on the South Australian economy, and no-one lost any money. The 44 billion was apparently someone's guess of what might have been invested over the next 20 years. The Olympic Dam expansion is still on the books, but it may take longer and look different when it happens. The day after the announcement, Olympic Dam was still the biggest industrial enterprise in South Australia, the largest one-site employer with 4,200 workers, and after only 24 years in business, one of the most productive

mines in Australian history. Nothing has changed, except that a few people with over-heated imaginations may have been disappointed. Strangely, no one has blamed the 'Lizard's Revenge', a rally by anti-nuclear protestors who chanted 'Shut Roxby Down' at the gates of the mine a month earlier. They're probably congratulating themselves for bringing about the announcement and there's no harm in that!

Peter Bell

Interview with Geoffrey Blainey

Keen eyed Ken the hammer wielding super geologist provides the following information for the benefit of members:

The Australian Geoscience Council has recently embarked on developing a series of educational and promotional videos under the theme of 'Geoscience in Australia'. The first of these, recorded earlier this year, features a talk/interview by Peter Couchman with our esteemed Patron, Professor Geoffrey Blainey, in which he broaches the subject of how Australia has been shaped by mineral discoveries. The video captures Professor Blainey's inimitable story telling style and should be of great interest to our members. The interview can be viewed on line at:

<http://www.agc.org.au/index.php/geoscience-in-australia>

Ken McQueen

New Career

Congratulations to **Barry McGowan** who has been involved in the making of a film on Lasseter's reef that was released at the Melbourne International Film Festival (Australia), at ACMI Cinemas, on Sunday 12th August. Called *Lasseter's Bones*, This is based on the story of Lewis Harold Bell Lasseter who in the late 1880s claimed to have discovered his El Dorado in the Australian outback. Barry has been researching Lasseter for many years and there is a belief by some who have noted his frequent overseas trips that he has actually cracked the secret but that he's not saying anything because of taxation, Centerlink and other concerns. Meanwhile, as well as attending the Film Premier,

Barry has recently taken up skiing and tennis – surely signs that enhanced by his discoveries of Lasseter's gold he has entered the Playboy stage of life! For a quick preview of the film, see: www.scribblefilms.com.au

INFORMATION WANTED

George Hall, Alexander Wilson Castle and the Gwalia Consols mine at Lake Violet

Alwyn Evans, one of our Welsh members (we actually have four) who is currently researching the life and activities of Welsh-Australian entrepreneur George W. Hall, the initial developer of the Sons of Gwalia mine before Hoover's managership, is looking for information on Hall's subsequent mining ventures between 1899 and 1910. It is known he purchased the Euro Mine on behalf of his company, the London and Westralian Mines and Finance Agency, and then he and Castle worked the Essex and Lake Violet mines near Wiluna as one mine. This was under the title 'Gwalia Consolidated/Consols', following that company selling the leases of their 'Gwalia' properties to the Sons of Gwalia Ltd.. Gwalia became the major mine in the 1902-1908 period following its opening near Wiluna. However, there appears to be little documentary evidence of their activities there. There is even less evidence after Castle's sudden death in 1905, but from the time Bewick Moreing took over the lease in 1908 more evidence becomes available. The best source found so far is Phillip Heydon's, *Wiluna, Edge of the Desert* (1996) reprinted by the Hesperian Press, but there is still relatively little there on Gwalia, and Hall and Castle don't even receive a mention.

Hall had by 1907 followed his mentor and senior partner William Pritchard Morgan to China on one of that entrepreneur's wildcat ventures, though Hall's son Frank remained at Wiluna as a mining engineer. If anyone has information on the Wiluna period, or indeed, has heard of any references to Hall and Morgan in China and Korea, Alwyn would be glad to hear from you at alwynazo@aol.com or text 00 44 7968649434. Contact from anyone with information on Pritchard

Morgan in his earlier escapades in Queensland would also be appreciated.

Missing Records

Robert Protheroe Jones (yet another Welshman!) has been working on the Swansea based Copperopolis project and is anxious to obtain information from anyone who might have copied information from the documents on the smelters, as detailed below. Unfortunately, the SA State Library has mislaid the documents that were contained in leather-bound volumes. If you have previously worked on these documents and retained notes, abstracts or have copied any of, or parts of the documents please contact Robert at: Robert.ProtheroeJones@museumwales.ac.uk

(1) English & Australian Copper Company: printed annual reports 1852-1874; London, annual 1852-1874; bound in 1 vol.

(2) English & Australian Copper Company: Report of Committee of Conference ...; London, 1857; bound in 1 vol, 17, [3]p.

(3) English & Australian Copper Company: Deed of Settlement; [London?] [1851?], bound in 1 vol, 58p.

OBITUARY – DIANE MENGHETTI (1940-2012)

In the last newsletter we announced that following a long illness, our late and esteemed member, **Diane Menghetti**, had passed away in Florida, on 18th June. The following tributes are provided respectively by friends and University colleagues, Jan Wegner and Kett Kennedy. While Jan concentrates on Diane's academic achievements, Kett presents a glowing picture that illustrates Diane's many and varied human qualities.

DIANE MENGHETTI (1940-2012) was Associate Professor of History and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Education and Social Science at James Cook University. She was Head of the School of History and Politics for a term and after the School was disestablished, was Head of Discipline of History. She began work at James Cook University in 1982 and researched and taught Australian History (especially mining history) and

Queensland Cultural Heritage until her 'retirement' in 2003, when she became a consultant historian. Following retirement she went to Florida to join her daughter and grandchildren. Diane also taught at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest, where she introduced the discipline of History to the Australian Studies Unit; and in the Australian Studies Unit at the University of Papua New Guinea, in Port Moresby. At other times she worked in both the Commonwealth and the Queensland public service and taught in primary and secondary schools.

Diane was among the first mature age students to be accepted into James Cook University. She graduated with First Class Honours in History, followed by a University Medal and the Jean Farnfield Prize in Australian History in 1980. Her PhD on the history of Charters Towers was awarded in 1984.

Diane was a member of the Queensland Heritage Council and an Expert Assessor for Heritage. She was on the Executive Committee of the National Trust, Queensland, and was also President for a term. She was made Honorary Fellow of the Queensland Museum and Vice-President of the Townsville Museum and Historical Society. She was also a member of the Queensland Professional Historians Association and on the Management Committee from 2000 to 2006. She was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Australian Mining History Association. She provided editorial services for the Board of Institute of International Affairs, North Queensland Branch (1989 and 1997-2003), the Editorial Board of *Clionet* (1993-2003), later *Electronic Journal of Australian and New Zealand History*, and was Editor of the Professional Historians Association (Qld) Newsletter from 2003 to 2006.

Diane worked on a number of public history projects. These included a project to locate, collect and store all available materials pertaining to the now-vanished mining town of Blair Athol. This project, which included the collection of a significant amount of oral history, was

undertaken over a period of four years and included the writing and publication of a book called *Blair Athol: the Life and Death of a Town*. Blair Athol Coal, a CRA subsidiary, underwrote the project. Another public project involved researching the mining history of Ravenswood and compiling a set of heritage trails for tourists visiting that town. The trails are documented in a guide-book, *Ravenswood: Five Heritage Trails*. Carpentaria Gold, a subsidiary of Mount Isa Mines, underwrote this project. She was also one of the principals in a heritage consultancy for Carpentaria Gold, an EIS for areas around Ravenswood.

Diane also published other books: *I Remember: Memories of Charters Towers*; *The Red North*, a history of radical politics in north Queensland during the depression of the 1930s; *A Century Not Out – 1906-2006: The St Vincent de Paul Society, Townsville Diocese*; and a history of the Japanese in Queensland, *Sound of Our Summer Seas*. She was co-author of *Caged: the first half century of the Magnetic Island to Townsville Swim* and *Townsville in War and Peace, 1942-1946*, both with Geoff Hansen. Her other work include more than fifty journal articles and conference papers as well as some heritage journalism.

Diane was the academic in charge of James Cook University's North Queensland Photographic Collection and the North Queensland Oral History Project from the 1980s. She led a project to digitise these collections and their indices to enable better access to students, researchers and the public.

She was a highly regarded historian who believed that local history (including North Queensland mining history) was important. She also believed that history should be accessible to everyone. Diane was active in furthering history and heritage in a wide range of organisations. Her energy, insight and generosity will be sadly missed.

Jan Wegner

Some Anecdotal Recollections

With a preview of Dr Janice Wegner's thorough, though dispassionate tribute to Diane Menghetti's academic career, community service and other attainments, I decided to focus on the humane aspect of a friend and former colleague.

Diane's death mid-year 2012, in Tampa (USA), was not unexpected. She had known for some time the medical diagnosis, stoically accepting the inevitable, and spent her months with daughter Garda and grandsons.

Diane first set foot on James Cook University Campus in late 1975 when she applied to enrol as a provisional matriculant in the School of Education. Admissions' officers rejected her; in one of the rare occasions in life, tears ran down her cheeks as she wandered aimlessly through a rear exit corridor which led into the Department of History.

Fortuitously, in a life-changing encounter, she bumped into Paul Rose, the Departmental Reader who noticed her distress and struck up a conversation. Rose was notorious for thrusting himself into every academic dogfight, or when the Campus was calm, would start one himself. He told her to wait in his office and stormed off to the Dean of Education then Dean of Arts. In short, Diane was granted mature-age entry on the proviso she majored in History.

Over the subsequent three years, she attained High Distinctions in all History subjects, collecting a swag of prizes. For her Honours thesis she had a choice of supervisors: Professor Brian Dalton, Henry Reynolds or myself. As Bogart remarked to Claude Raines in *Casablanca* – "I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship". And it certainly was a wonderful supervisor-student academic relationship.

After First-Class Honours, University Medal and a PhD scholarship, Diane opted to change emphasis from political history to mining history. At the time I was editing the two volumes of *Readings in North Queensland Mining History*, enlisting the talents of historians (mostly young graduates) such as Peter Bell, Jan Wegner,

Noreen Kirkman, Ruth Kerr and others who later gave service to the AHMA. Diane accepted the challenge of a history of the North's premier gold city, Charters Towers. With an innovative approach at that time, she combined aerial and colour photographs with oral history and ink sketches of mining technology and practices. She took a course in speed-reading to enable coverage of the many newspapers and printed official sources. I advised her to publish when she was confident of her research findings, which she did, and finally, prior to signing off the Supervisor's Approval form, urged her to index her PhD thesis, which she did. The external examiners remarked upon such diligence.

Meanwhile, I had become friendly with Di's husband John, 19 years her senior, then chef at the local Italian Club where we enjoyed bocce and betting on slow racehorses, for which Diane had little interest. She however was a wonderful hostess, and here I discard chronology for an anecdote.

In 1995, when JCU convened the AHA Peripheral Visions Conference, which encompassed the first meeting of the Australian Mining History Association, Diane was living at Saunders Beach. She offered her sea frontage for a farewell evening party under a marquee. By 7:00pm, well over three score attendees were revelling, with wine and antipasto being plentiful. Suddenly a mighty storm hit. In Northern vernacular: "It pissed down", weight of water collapsing the marquee. Diane was already awaiting the guests under the covered patio with every towel in her linen cupboard. A few minutes later, in softly spoken tone, she pronounced "dinner is ready". John's trays of cannelloni, lasagne, mud crab in alfredo sauce and freshly caught local steamed prawns appeared from the kitchen. She was at her desk by 8:00am next morning, leaving Peter Bell to rescue the wine bottles, and John to clear up the debris.

But back to the 1980s: Diane's PhD conferred, she was offered a temporary tutorship but decided to look further afield

– securing a job in the Canberra public service during which time she became proficient in emerging computer technology. In the late 1980s a vacancy arose for an additional Lecturer in Australian History at JCU. Diane applied as John was “homesick”. It was a formidable field of candidates, and came down to two at the final Selection Committee. Diane was given the nod on the casting vote of the Chair of the Academic Board.

Having succeeded Brian Dalton as Chair I was nominally again her “boss” but soon wondered who really had the whip in hand. Diane was the first woman appointed to a tenured post within the Department of History & Politics against Dalton’s wishes. When she approached me to introduce gender studies I initially balked but conceded a trial after her considerable persuasion. Over the next decade she produced several splendid Honours graduates through her programme.

Diane’s door was always open to students without appointment, even on the most trivial of matters. Long working days were her norm. Rarely did she retire before midnight, the late evening hours given over to research and writing. I often remarked to her: “Thank Christ your energy and commitment is not infectious.” Whereas the less diligent academic scanned an essay or tutorial paper and graded it along with a single sentence comment, Diane spent hours on marking and comprehensive advice. She even wrote appraisals on bloody exam papers, in contrast to contemporary philosophy of “mark and shred, hence no appeal”.

Only towards the end of my university years did I suspect a latent motivation. Diane spent time before academia as a music teacher of piano. Her patience with less talented keyboard-bangers, combined with her desire to encourage a promising virtuoso, tuned her notion of duty. She was an activist for the establishment of the Australian Chamber of Music Festival.

James Cook University, its students of History and sub-streams received more than value for salary from the woman initially denied provisional enrolment. Her

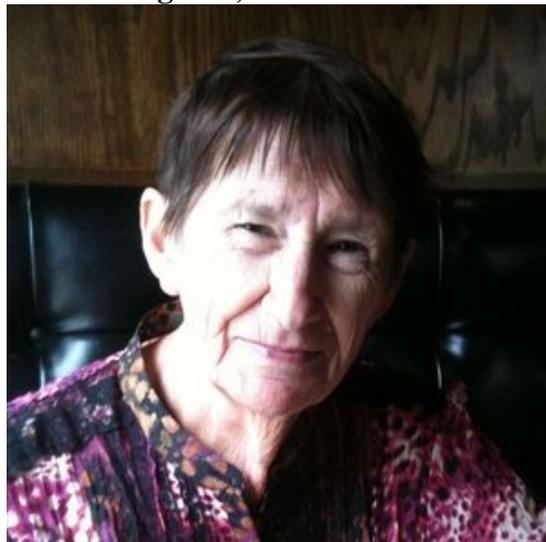
15 years on tenured staff as a teacher, researcher, and committees and community service toiler, well warranted her rapid promotion to Associate Professor (with strong support from external referees).

In one of the last serious conversations I had with Diane over a decade ago I stressed a priority and proffered advice: “Di, keep the sandbags and razor wire around History & Politics if you can. Although it is too late in your career, notwithstanding your record of achievement, there will be no new Chair. You don’t possess the mongrel streak nor the mendacity to sustain brawls with bureaucrats and peers.” She tried her hardest to sustain the Oral History Programme, the North Queensland Photographic Project, the widely acclaimed Publishing Programme and community involvement with the Australian Institute of International Affairs and a host of town-gown interactions which were mindlessly deemed from above to have no place in the 21st Century university.

Dr Menghetti was warm, generous, self-effacing and humane. Her family was a priority. Her school of History & Politics was her love; her friends were embraced with equal care and affection. *Vale*, Diane Menghetti, a true Troubadour.

Kett Kennedy

Diane Menghetti, 1940-2012



MJD/Sept'12