



# AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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### EDITORIAL

The forthcoming Beechworth Conference promises a full business and social programme that looks as if it will be up to the usual high standard. Being in Ned Kelly country adds another dimension to the proceedings, and indeed that venerable gentleman will be the subject of one of the entertainments.

This year, we have gone a further step in our development, by encouraging two young scholars with payment of grants, to attend and present papers. Along with a year's membership, this should help bring down our mean age by a fraction and hopefully encourage a flow of new blood and ideas into our ranks. Details of the programme will be found on a separate document.

Meanwhile, if you haven't already signed up, go to our webpage for the registration form and conference accommodation information, noting too, that information on how to get to Beechworth was placed in the previous newsletter.

We are continually planning ahead, and at the Annual General Meeting in Beechworth, dates and venues for conferences in 2015 and 2016 will be considered. If you have suggestions please let the committee know. Better still, if you have venue in mind, would you like to be the local organizer?

### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

**AMHA 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference 29 September – 4 October 2013**, If you still intend to register, please note that the Rutherglen tour on 28th September, and the Woolshed tour on 1<sup>st</sup> October are now full. To register on-line go to: <https://www.registernow.com.au/secure/Register.aspx?ID=8583>

### Happy hints:

1. Bring clothes for all weathers, including boots.
2. Please be at the Memorial Hall well in time on Saturday morning to collect your satchels. The buses leave the Hall at 8.30am.
3. Registrations will be taken at the Hall on Friday 28th September for those who turn up before the official start on Saturday.
4. Afternoon tea on the Tuesday afternoon tour to the Eldorado Dredge and Woolshed Valley was not covered in registration, and will be \$5. A list of names will be passed round during the Saturday Rutherglen Tour for you to tick if you wish to partake of this afternoon repast. Please pay at the reception desk on Sunday, as numbers have to be phoned through to Eldorado before we begin papers on Monday morning.

For further information contact:  
[Nicola.williams@monash.edu](mailto:Nicola.williams@monash.edu)

### **Mining History Association (USA) Annual Conference 11-15 June 2014.**

The above conference will be held in Trinidad, Colorado. If interested in presenting a paper, provide a title, and abstract (no longer than one page) and your biographical information, to Dr Eric Clements, Department of History, Southeast Missouri State University. Email: [eclements@semo.edu](mailto:eclements@semo.edu)

### **10<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress, Charters Towers, QLD, 2014**

Another reminder that our 20<sup>th</sup> AMHA Conference will be run in conjunction with the above International Congress between **6-13 July 2014**. Submissions for papers are now open, and there will be a closing date of 28 February 2014. Organizer, Kett Kennedy, promises a full social and 'experiences' programme. Check out the latest information on-line (it's regularly updated) at: [www.ct2014miningcongress.com](http://www.ct2014miningcongress.com)  
Book your accommodation soon.

### **BITS & PIECES**

#### **Local lad expounds on wooden miners' cottages - addendum**

In the last newsletter it was announced that Peter Bell's revelations about Burra's 1849 cottage could be found on the web. However, the BBC, that produced the video, did the dirty and changed the address. If you looked in vain you can now assuage your curiosity by clicking on:

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2013/05/06/3752663.htm>

### **Prospectors & Miners Hall of Fame**

Those who have followed the saga of the Australian Miners & Prospectors Hall of Fame will be pleased to note that the body has been restructured and has continued with its practice of inducting worthy champions of the mining industry. The rebirth of the organization took place on 3 September 2013 alongside the awards night of the Association of Mining & Exploration Companies, at Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre. At the ceremony, Professor Odwyn Jones

OA and Mr Kenneth Talbot were honoured.

This newsletter will be a little late had you wished to attend, but next year, to remove the idea that it is a WA centred organisation, its intended to locate the awards presentation in Brisbane. For further information contact Kim Hewson on mobile number 0412-884-427

Email: [admin@mininghalloffame.com.au](mailto:admin@mininghalloffame.com.au)

### **'The World Turned Upside-down' - The Australian gold rush as told through song, story and reminiscence'**

Our Vice-President, Ross Both (ye of the musical ear) has alerted us to this collection of goldfields songs by well-know folklorist and performer of traditional Australian folk songs, Warren Fahey. This has wonderful stories about the chaos caused by the first rushes; refers to emigration; life on the goldfields; the role of authority; bushranging; the later company mines and other topics that will titillate the mining ear. Over 135 songs, many newly discovered, plus many great images from the archives are in the collection. There is also a e-book version that has bonus audio tracks, including some from Fahey's early collecting period.

The collection is available for \$20 from either the Apple iBookstore (free sample chapter available) or as a Pdf that can be read on any computer. Email [wfahey@bigpond.net.au](mailto:wfahey@bigpond.net.au) for a copy of the downloadable Pdf. AMHA members purchasing the Pdf will also receive several bonus audio tracks.

### **Coober Pedy Drive-in**

Thanks to Sue Britt for the following tit-bits on the history of the Coober Pedy Drive-in – must have been a wild place in its hey-day!

Along with opals, dugout living and unique mining machinery, the Drive-in is a feature of Coober Pedy. It is one of the last surviving drive-ins in Australia and one of the longest running outdoor theatres in the state. Before the drive-in was built in 1965, the only regular place for people to meet and greet was at the

store on truck day. Films had been shown previously in the town hall using projectors mounted on a platform hung from the rafters. Before that there had been showings of cartoons projected on the wall of Brewster's Store. The Drive-In provided a multi-cultural venue for people to regularly get together to share news, gossip and entertainment. Families used to come when the gates opened prepared to have a picnic meal before the films started. Opal miners came in their work utes, initially with gelignite among their other daily mining tools. As beer drinking was allowed, the operators decided it would be prudent to ban explosives.



The Progress and Miners Association built the Drive-in with money raised from donations and the raffle of a new Holden ute. Volunteer labour did the construction work. The projection room was a two-storey corrugated iron shed with the two Tokiwa projectors up top and a canteen below.

The monies raised from the film showings were a major source of revenue for the town. In 1969 the Drive-In was upgraded. The old cone speakers, mounted on the projection booth, were replaced with the classic drive-in speakers that could be hung on the car window.

In its heyday, 8 different films were shown each week, giving Coober Pedy the highest rate of film turnover in Australia. Television arrived in 1980 and with it came the end of the Drive-in's monopoly on entertainment. It was closed down in 1984 except for occasional special showings. In 1986, 500 vehicles packed in to see *Crocodile Dundee*. But, by 1995 the drive-in was nearly derelict,

the screen a favourite nesting place for pigeons.

In 1996, a group approached the District Council with a proposal to re-open the drive-in. They acquired two Kalee 21 projectors from the Port Augusta Drive-in when it closed down, repaired the screen, restored the canteen and showed movies every week. After 2000, when their lease ran out, a group of volunteers took over, showing films fortnightly.

*Pastures Green! Coober Pedy drive-in c.1972*



In 2013, digitisation means that movies on 35mm film will no longer be available. Thus, the Coober Pedy Drive-in must raise \$120,000 to go digital in order to continue its valuable community service, preserving an icon of Western culture for locals and tourists.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

*Keith Johns, Croweaters From Cornwall of Mine: Keith Johns' Ancestry and autobiography to 1948, Price \$30.*

Many of our readers will be aware that our venerable member, Keith Johns, OAM, spent many years as Director General of the South Australian Department of Mines and Energy. However, few will know about his background and earlier exploits, but if inquisitive, all will be revealed in Keith's latest publication. This traces his life from his birth in Port Pirie in 1927 until he took up full-time employment in 1948. In his formative years Keith was involved in farming but in his teens attended the University of South Australia where he graduated in 1948 with a BSc Honours degree, majoring in Geology under the tutelage of Professor Sir Douglas Mawson. While this segment of his life

will interest the readership, the main focus of the story dwells on his ancestry in which he became interested after some 15 years in mineral exploitation and development, when he discovered that his forebears on his paternal side were Cornish miners. In Australia, he lists among his ancestors, his great-great grandfather, Thomas Roberts who in September 1845 was instrumental in opening up and being appointed by the South Australian Mining Association as Captain of the Burra Burra Mine. Keith marvels at the difference in the primitive tools used by Thomas, ten miners and a mining smith when tackling the fabulous lode, compared with the sophisticated exploitation of the Olympic dam opened up in South Australia some 143 years later – a project in which Keith played an important part.

Keith also ventures into his ‘Cornishness’, a feature of his life that was awakened in 1964 on his first visit to the Duchy, and which has been enhanced with further visits to his ancestors’ shores. While today a genuine and proud South Australian ‘Croweater’, Keith’s story of the path to this achievement should be of great interest to many of our readers

## **OBITUARY**

### **Ed Hunter – 1926-2013**

Those who attended the Greymouth Conference, NZ, in 2010, will remember with affection, Ed Hunter from the USA, who attended his first AMHA Conference at the age of 85 years. Ed made many friends and was so delighted with his visit that he became a member of our organisation. Sadly, Ed passed away on 7 July 2013 at his home in Victor, Colorado. I’m thankful for the following information on Ed’s life from the pages of the of MHA Newsletter:

<http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org/>

‘**Edgar T. Hunter** was born in Yonkers, New York in 1926, and after turning 18, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps during

World War II. Ed met Esther Cherry Sailer, and they were married in 1952. Ed graduated from the Colorado School of Mines in 1953 with a degree in mining engineering, and the two of them were off and running to a number of western mining camps over the years including Oracle, Arizona, Lark, Utah, southern New Mexico, Silverton, Colorado, and Nome, Alaska. In 1977, Ed and Cherry made Victor, Colorado, their home. Ed retired from the Cripple Creek and Victor Gold Mining Company in 1993 as their History/Culture Permit Manager. Ed had a life long interest in mining history and accumulated a large library of mining related books, as well as an impressive artifact collection of mine lighting. Ed and Cherry were active volunteers at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry in Colorado Springs. Ed was a founding member of the Southern Teller County Focus Group, which promotes historic preservation in the area. He was also very involved with the Victor Lowell Thomas Museum located in Victor, Colorado. Ed was a very active member of the Mining History Association from its early days. He was the president of MHA in 2003-2004, council member in 1997-1999, on the nominating committee in 1995 and a member of the Distinguished Service Award Committee. Ed and Cherry organized the 2003 MHA annual conference in Cripple Creek, and Ed was awarded the Rodman Paul Award for outstanding contributions to mining history in 2002. Cherry passed away in 2004. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to Ed’s son, Andrew Thompson Hunter, and daughters Katherine Sailer Hunter, Nancy Bowman Hunter-Parker, Elizabeth-Cherry Taylor Hunter-Ball, and their families’.

We join the MHA in extending our sympathy to the family, and regret that we had so little time with Ed, who had a fascinating repertoire of mining experiences and stories, and who made such an impression on all during his visit.