



# AUSTRALASIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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### EDITORIAL

Having recently read Criena Fitzgerald's excellent publication *Turning Men into Stone\** and being appalled at the callousness of mining management and authorities as to their treatment and attitude to victims and dependents of silicosis in the West Australian gold industry well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a shock to learn that little seems to have been learned from history. The spate of recent 'discoveries' that reveal an unknown number of coal miners in Queensland have for years been misdiagnosed despite suffering from pneumoconiosis, suggests that complacency and perhaps lack of concern have once again come to the fore. If there's one thing to be learned it's that the focus in our mining industry needs to focus on safety and health rather than on profits at any cost. While the misdiagnosis in these cases could be associated with the poor training of those who interpreted the X-Rays of sufferers, that does not excuse those who should have been closely monitoring the situation. Let's hope that this is the wake-up call that will stir the industry to doing even more in the vital area of health and safety than recent findings have revealed.

\* *Turning Men into Stone: A social and medical history of silicosis in Western Australia 1890-1970*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, WA, 2016, pp. i-vii, 1-242, Illustrations, ISBN 978-0-85905-635-9.

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

#### AMHA 22nd Annual Conference, Cobar, NSW, 16-21 October 2016.

The event is almost here and Ken McQueen and his team have organized a full and interesting programme as you can discover on the attached Conference programme. As noted, the presenters include two of our student grant award winners, Meghan Adams and Juniata Kwong. It's good to see that our conferences are still attracting young students of mining history.

#### Conference Transport

We still only have one passenger wishing to travel by our mini bus from Dubbo to Cobar on Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup> October. It's not too late to book (cost is \$20, payable on the bus to keep the driver in coffee). If interested please contact Adrian Hutton at [marie.hutton@bigpond.com](mailto:marie.hutton@bigpond.com). Adrian will also be available to wheel folk around Cobar during the conference.

#### Conference Accommodation

If having a problem with booking accommodation, please contact the Conference organizer, Ken McQueen at [Ken.McQueen@canberra.edu.au](mailto:Ken.McQueen@canberra.edu.au)

#### 53<sup>rd</sup> National Gem & Mineral Show, Lithgow, NSW 14-17 April 2017.

WA member Mike Freeman wishes to alert those interested in Lapidary of the above national event. Information can be gleaned from the following link:

<http://aflaca.org.au/gemboree/>

Members might also be interested in reading their 2016 September Newsletter that contains a few interesting articles. Did you know for instance that Crocoite was discovered in Tasmania at the Heazlwood silver-lead mine in 1895, and that in 2000 it was proclaimed the state's mineral emblem? There is also an informative article on coalmining at Lithgow, as well as other articles.

(To find the newsletter, click on the 'Gemboree' tab).

### **PUBLICATIONS**

**David Lee, *The Second Rush, Mining and the Transformation of Australia*, Connor Court, Redland Bay, Queensland, 2016. ISBN 978-1-925501-14-8.**

Members will be interested in this recently published work by member David Lee. *The Second Rush* traces the progress of Australia's second minerals rush over half a century, examining explorers, financiers, managers and engineers; mining companies and their relationship with governments; workers and industrial relations; and the impact of mining on the environment and on Australia's first peoples.

**Janie Mason, *Anzac Journey from Adelaide River o Lemnos*,**

Those who attended the Darwin Conference will remember the talk given by NT members Janie Mason when she gave a paper on nursing: 'Beginning experiences: bush nurse and wife in Batchelor, living area for Rum Jungle mine'. Janie's book was launched in Darwin on 12 May, on the occasion of Charles Darwin University Nurses' Day (Florence Nightingale's birthday).

**11<sup>th</sup> International Mining History Congress, Linares, Spain, Spain 6-11 September 2016**

This proved to be a full-on and fascinating Conference. Spanish siestas, we discovered are a myth as far as Linares is concerned, or at least that was our experience during the week of dawn to late morning experiences. As well as a

full and varied diet of excellent papers, there were indulgences in the area of gastronomic delights, with the culmination being a 9-course banquet at the local Bullring. A variety of cultural tours and experiences also added to the week's activities – including the appearance of gun and knife toting Banditos who waylaid us at a mine site – fortunately they'd been hired by the Colectivo to add spice to the visit.

Note that the conference was well attended by our members and their partners. Our illustrious President gave a Keynote paper on '*Australian mining history and heritage: an overview from pre-European settlement to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century*'. There were papers ranging through the alphabet from Criena Fitzgeralds' paper on the WA Mines' Department's Camel breeding programme, to Bill Musk's 'Wittenoom as a modern industrial disaster'. Other paper contributors were: Mel Davies, Nic Haygarth, and Ken McQueen, while Ken's good wife Mary presented in the Poster section. Wendy Carter was there providing entertainment, while our overseas members also had high profiles in the presentation area, notably IMHC President Roger Burt, Peter Claughton and Jeremy Mouat.

It was also nice to meet up with familiar faces, including a strong Japanese presence that included a few who had appeared at some of our own Annual conferences, including Sunao Muarata and Hiroshi Ichihara, as well as the instigator for the conference, UK's Robert Vernon, who floated the idea of the Congress while at our Charters Towers meeting.

The Linares Colectivo did a marvellous job of organizing the event and at the business meeting a number of suggestions were made for the next Meeting of the IMHC, with Canada being a possible venue. Hopefully, applications from other parts of the world where the organisation hasn't yet set foot, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Scandinavia, will be among venues to be suggested.

## **BITS & PIECES**

### **Research Request**

The research on Te Aroha and other topics by member **Philip Hart** has now been published online in 160 'working papers'. Easiest way to find these is to go to University of Waikato Research Commons and click on his name, or to Google Scholar and check Te Aroha mining; or, if a particular person is being chased up, click on Google which has indexed the papers allowing any person of interest to be easily traced. It is highly recommended that people first check the Introductory Notes, which among other things lists the papers in order (they appear out of order on the screen, for some inscrutable and puzzling reason).

Philip asks that researchers and descendants contact him with corrections, additional information, and so on. Glad to say that within a few days of the information going on-line, Philip received feedback from the descendants of one person he has investigated that has provided him with information that was not available elsewhere. This has allowed him to revise the paper. Revisions will be put online ASAP and be noted as such.

Philip can be contacted at:

[prhart@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:prhart@waikato.ac.nz)

### **Tom Vallance Medal**

Members might remember that a year ago this prestigious award went to our esteemed member, David Branagan. The award, presented to those 'who have made a significant contribution to researching, recording, investigating, documenting and/or publishing about people, places or events of historical importance to the geological sciences in Australia/Australasia', was this year presented by the Earth Sciences History Group (ESHG) to Tom Darragh.

The citation to Tom stated: 'Tom Darragh has been an active researcher in the history of geology of Australia especially Victoria for decades and was highly regarded by Tom Vallance. Tom's publication record reveals the breadth and depth of his contribution, as does his longstanding membership of the

International Commission on the History of Geological Sciences (INHIGEO). Tom Darragh has shown special interest in the biographies of Australian geologists, history of palaeontology, early geological maps, institutional history and the geological contribution of German scientists in Australia. Notably Tom has been enlisted by the Australian Dictionary of Biography to undertake a large number of biographical entries on their behalf. He has also contributed papers to the highly regarded "Historical Records of Australian Science". Most recently Tom's work on the translation, editing and commentary on the Leichhardt diaries deserves special praise'.

### **JOURNAL**

Vol. 14 of the Journal should be with paid up members at the end of October/early November, but my usual message – if wishing to publish, its never too early to submit for the 2017 volume. Hope to see a number of submissions soon!

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 2016 AGM of the Association will take place at the Cobar Golf Club, Cobar at 4.00-5.00pm on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October. The Agenda items are presented separately.

MJD/September 2016.