AUSTRALIAN MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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Editorial

The fifth AMHA Hobart Conference promises to be the most exciting to date. There are 28 papers on offer and a selection that should meet all appetites. The 'warm-up' that involves a two-day tour should set the mood and the dinner at the Shipwright's Arms on the final night should round off affairs in convivial fashion. Hopefully, the proceedings will stimulate further interest in the AMHA among visiting historians and especially from historians in the host state. Hope you can make it, and we look forward to meeting some old friends and new faces at the Sandy Bay venue

Honour Award

I'm sure that all members will join the committee in congratulating Dr. Ruth Kerr for being selected into the Australian Honours list that was announced in June. Ruth has been a leading figure in Australian community history and in particular, is well known for her publications on Australian mining history and the history of Queensland. She was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for 'service to the preservation of Australian history and the community'. Ruth has also been a passionate and stalwart supporter of the AHMA since its formation and we are thus doubly delighted that she has been so honoured.

Mis-numbered Newsletter

Some of the more observant might have noticed that the June newsletter was labelled No. 1, 1999. It should have been number 2. This notice is to allay the fears of those who might believe that they've been short-changed by missing an edition.

Annual General Meeting

Our AGM will be held in Room 206, at the Sandy Bay Campus, University of Tasmania, Hobart, between 3.30pm and 5.30pm, Friday **1st October**. Any substantive **general motions** or **motions to alter the constitution** should be sent to reach me by **11th September**. Please note that the attached Agenda will become the official agenda if no motions are received by that date. Anyone not attending the meeting but wishing to **nominate or re-nominate** for a

position on the committee, should forward their interest to me by that date.

New Books

i) Recently received was a copy of *Bendigo the German Connection,* edited by member and well known author, Frank Cusack. As the name suggests, this is the story of the German settlers in that goldfields town and their contribution to mining and other economic and social contributions in the 19th century. As well as chapters specifically on mining by the editor and Ralph Birrell, the text contains an invaluable section providing bibliographical details of the German community. I shan't say anymore as that will mean stealing the thunder of the reviewer who has been asked to report back for a future edition of the newsletter.

Frank Cusack (ed.), *Bendigo the German Chapter*, The German Heritage Society, Bendigo, 1998, pp. 275 + iv, photographs, illustrations,
ISBN 0 646 33773 4
Price: $49.50 plus $5.50 postage, from The German Heritage Society, Bendigo, PO Box 44, Kangaroo Flat, Vic. 3555

ii) A book that will appeal to geologists, mining engineers, prospectors, historians and cartographers is *The Classic Robert Logan Jack Map Collection*. A limited edition and high quality production, this promises to become a collector's item. The author, Inspector of Mines at Charters Towers, Ross Thomas, has produced a limited edition, leather bound A3 sized book that will be individually numbered. It boasts 24 carat gold lettering with a novel magnification lens bookmark complete with a gold tassel.

For the information of readers, Robert Logan Jack was arguably Queensland's most famous Geologist who laboured for over 22 years from 1876 to 1899, producing geological reports for the colony. The maps and text detail not onlygeological and mining information, but historical data on Cobb and Co. routes, old camp sites, hotels, Chinese market gardens and much more. Some of the maps in the book have never before been published. Also provided is a description of each map, historical detail and photographs of the man and his family.

The author states that Jack's tombstone lies shattered in Waverley Cemetery in Sydney and that he is hopeful the publication will raise an awareness of the importance of the man that might prompt some corrective action.

Publication details:
Ross Thomas, *The Classic Robert Logan Jack Map Collection*, 1999. Copies at $240 (includes postage) are available from North Queensland Mining Museums Pty. Ltd., 2 High Street, Charters Towers, Qld 4820.
Alternatively, order direct via the web at:
www.users.bigpond.com/pasi/rljbook

A pat-on-the back

Following the appeal for information on mine disasters contained in the last newsletter, Peter Bell was extremely gratified with the response. Not only did the replies provide him with details of seven accidents of which he had been previously unaware but also the respondents were able to contribute further detail and useful methodological comment. As Peter states, 'Clearly the collective information in the possession of AMHA members is an awesome research resource, and their willingness to help is most impressive.' So a pat on the back to the membership, and a reminder that these columns are open for any requests for help on any issue.

Secretary's Absence

Yours truly will be delving in various archives in the UK from 2 October to 20th November. During my absence, please address any urgent enquiries to our President Pat Bertola. He can be found at:

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Hobart Conference Timetable

Wednesday 29 September

8.30 - 9.30am – Registration, Room 211.
9.30 - 10.00am – Opening address by Dr Neal Blewett. Arts lecture Theatre.

All Mining History Sessions in Room 206

Session 1 (11.15 – 12.45). Chair: TBA
Greg Dickens - *A Hundred Years of Mining in Tasmania.*
James Verrier – *Development and decline of a mining town: Balfour 1906-21.*

Session 2 (1.45 – 3.15). Chair: Patrick Bertola
Glyn Roberts – *Professionals and the Tasmanian Government in the early development of the metal mining industry.*
Nic Haygarth - *The Life and Times of James 'Philosopher' Smith up until 1876.*
Steve Sorrell – *Mt Biscoff – mountain of tin.*

Session 3 (3.30 – 5.00). Chair: Mel Davies
Sachiko Sone – *Japanese coal mining – social life and relationships on the Chikuho coalfield from the late nineteenth century to recent times.*
Christopher Carter – *Where old and new worlds collide (pictorial).*

Thursday 30 September

Session 1 (9.30 – 11.00). Chair: Greg Dickens
Ralph Birrell – *Claims and leases in the Bendigo Mining District – the first twenty years.*
David White – *Prelude to the black coal mining by the State in Victoria*
Jan Penney – *The Australian Number 2 Mining Disaster: can we do it nightly?*

Session 2 (11.15–12.45). Chair: Tony Webster
Peter Bell – *The Chinese on Australia's mining fields: some historical and archaeological problems.*
Geoff Hansen – *The Chinese on the Cape River Gold Field, North Queensland.*
Barry McGowan – *The Chinese on the goldfields – a case study in stereotypes and historical neglect.*

Session 3 (1.45 – 3.15). Chair: Glyn Roberts
Patrick Bertola – *Kalgoorlie's mines in the 1920s.*
Betty Cosgrove – *'The Captain' – company man or pragmatic manipulator? G. A. Richard at the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited.*
Greg Jackman – *90 years at the Marie Louise: cycles of tin scratching on Blue Tier.*

Session 4 (4.45 – 5.15). Chair: Ruth Kerr
Richard G. Hartley – *Filter presses and vacuum filters in Kalgoorlie's rise to world leadership in gold metallurgy 1901 – 1908.*
Adrian Hutton & Leonie Knapman - *Problems associated with the mining of kerosene.*
Roger Kellaway - *Oil shale at the Mersey: the West Bank 1924- 1934.*

7.00 for 7.30 – Australian Historical Association Conference Dinner – Hadley's Restaurant.

Friday 1 October

Session 1 (9.30 – 11.00). Chair: Chris Carter
Battery at Rocky Bluffs on the Stannary Hills Tramway, 1902.
Lindsay Witham – *The railways and tramways of Zeehan.*
Lou Rae – *Abt Railway: Its role in the development of the Mt Lyell Mining Field (Pictorial).*

Session 2 (11.15–12.45).
Chair: Barry McGowan
Carol Bacon – *Convict coalmines at Salt Water River, Tasmania.*
Peter Ryle – *Elusive black gold: the search for coal in the Cooktown area.*
Ian Terry – *Bricks and mortar: convict quarrying on Maria Island.*

Session 3 (1.45 – 3.15) Chair: Peter Bell
Ron Bugg – *Protecting mining heritage – the Gipps Creek Mineral Field*
Denise Gaughwin – *Managing historic mining sites in Tasmania's wood productron forests.*
John Miedecke – *Heritage issues associated with the re-opening of the historic Beaconsfield Gold Mine.*
Ruth Kerr – *Ruffashell Street and the Tin*

3.30–5.30
AMHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7.00 for 7.30 –
AMHA CONFERENCE DINNER– Shipwright's Arms Hotel

Hobart Conference Abstracts

As anyone looking at these columns will realise, the conference promises a very tempting menu in the mining field. No doubt, some of the offerings will later be presented as articles in the new AMHA journal.

Carol Bacon

Convict Coalmines at Salt Water River, Tasmania.

Abstract to be forwarded.

Peter Bell

The Chinese on Australia's Mining Fields: some Historical and Archaeological Problems

While it is probably no longer necessary to describe the history of the Chinese in Australia as "a neglected topic", there is still a lot that we do not understand. This paper points out of the poorly-understood areas in our knowledge of the Chinese on Australia's mining fields: the varying means of immigration and supply infrastructure, giving rise to diverse social organisation and material culture among the Chinese in Australia; the effects of European discriminatory measures on Chinese communities; the nature of internal Chinese migration between Australian mining fields, and the role of violence between Europeans and Chinese, both in folklore and reality. The paper also considers some parallel puzzles in the archaeological evidence.

The net effect of these problems suggests that the degree of diversity among Chinese communities in Australia was so great that it is not very useful to think of "The Chinese" as a single group. To do this invites superficial generalisation at best, and racist stereotyping at worst. Historians seeking to make sense of topics involving the Chinese on Australian mining fields in future will need to do more work on who they were, where they came from, and why they were there.

Patrick Bertola

Kalgoorlie's mines in the 1920s

In the 1920s many gold mining companies in Kalgoorlie, and indeed worldwide, faced serious threats to their survival. While the increases in costs they had experienced during and after the war had to some extent been offset by the premiums on the standard price of gold, those premiums declined markedly from the early 1920s and, in effect, were negligible from 1923. On the one hand, profits fell sharply, and on the other, companies could not finance the new developments they had curtailed during the war and that now were critical for their survival. This paper examines the responses of mining companies to the developing crisis. It identifies four main categories of action: direct attacks on the wages and conditions of labour; attempts to modify the arrangements under which mining was carried out; re-structuring of companies; and attempts to elicit state support for the industry. It suggests that labour suffered a major reversal in terms of the numbers employed and its social relations with employers, and that these were critical conditions for companies to proceed with new developments. Further, it proposes that the most successful companies at the end of the decade were those who were also able to marshal new capital and, to a lesser extent, to establish a positive relationship with the state in regards to its proposals for re-structuring the industry in Kalgoorlie.

Ralph Birrell

Claims and Leases in the Bendigo Mining District – the First Twenty years

Early Victorian governments took years to develop a consistent policy on the issue of mining claims and mining leases for goldfields. Pastoralists, businessmen, miners and mining companies alternately exerted their influence. At the time of the initial discovery of gold in mid 1851, the government followed the policy adopted by the government of New South Wales. However, in subsequent regulations it endeavoured to implement the policy of the local pastoralists so as to force the miners to return to their previous employment. When the contribution of gold to colonial development was realised the local businessmen pressured the government to encourage mining but the pastoralists prevented any reduction of the licence fee for a mining claim.

Whereas English mining companies influenced the early regulations on leases, the miners frustrated these regulations by pegging claims on the areas advertised for leasing. After Eureka, the miners effectively gained control of the regulations for claims and indirect control of the size of leases, though by 1859, the government had regained total control of leases. Regulations under the Mining Statute of 1865, brought relative stability.

This paper discusses changes to the regulations between 1851 and 1873, and in the process

will analyse statistics associated with claim applications, forfeitures, amalgamation of leases, and the effect of quartz mining and changing economic conditions upon the changing scenario.

Ron Bugg

Protecting Mining Heritage – The Gipps Creek Mineral Field

The Fingal Valley - Ben Lomond area of Tasmania has a rich mining heritage for both metallic minerals and coal. Coal was known to exist in the area from the early 1840s, while gold, which has been mined intermittently ever since, was discovered at Lord's Nook (later Mangana) in February 1852. Tin and tungsten were discovered on the southern flanks of the Ben Lomond Plateau in the early 1870s.

Several mines in the Gipps Creek area were worked from 1872, many of them using a separation plant at the Great Republic Mine. While all the mines had closed by had ceased to operate by the turn of the century, one or two reopened for short periods in the early 1900s and during the Second World War.

Small dormitory towns, connected by a network of bush tracks and small gauge bush railways grew up along with the mines. The townships have long since disappeared but a heritage of artefacts and foundation 'drawn' plans are evident in the reclaimed bush. Ready access by the public and proximity to forestry operations today pose a potential threat to the integrity of the sites. As the sites lay near an education camp at the old mine site of Storeys Creek, they have the potential to become a rich educational source for visiting school groups. The camp already contains a historic photographic and artefact display of the area and has the potential to supplement activities carried out at the mine and the dormitory town sites. Safety on the sites is, however, a concern and Mineral Sources Tasmania has co-operated to bring up the safety standards thus making them suitable for use by large groups. The paper briefly discusses the mining and associated social history of the area, the work that Mineral Resources Tasmania are carrying out to make the area safe for public use, and how the area may be used as an educational resource.

Christopher Carter

Where Old and New Worlds Collide

Potosi, Bolivia, was the world's richest silver mine during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. While the early miners simply gathered rich silver ore from the surface and exposed veins, production increased from about 1575 following the introduction of Old World technology utilising water power and mercury amalgamation. The success of both extraction and processing resulted in Potosi becoming the largest city in the New World by 1620. Potosi's history is well recorded and there are numerous publications detailing its wealth, development and systems of enforced labour. The archaeological evidence demonstrating the adaptation of known technologies to suit the site, particularly in the early years, has been less well studied.

This paper seeks to highlight the importance of the utilisation of technologies developed in Europe and their implementation in foreign and often hostile environments. It also highlights the cultural and industrial heritage of Potosi and how such aspects of mining history require management practices to ensure their protection and conservation for the future.

Betty Cosgrove

'The Captain' – Company man or pragmatic manipulator? G. A. Richard at the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited.

The Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company management paradigm was not unusual in its concept for the progress of a large enterprise. The resident general manager was the authority in a hierarchical system that encompassed section managers, shift bosses and every section of the mine and Works. In the role of 'company man' the general manager had also to honour responsibility to Board and shareholders. This paper will focus on the space and place of metallurgist G. A. Richard, during his term (1904-1912) as the fourth of six general managers of the mine, which closed in 1927.

Richard's term was paradoxical, for in many aspects of administration he was agent, yet in others, victim His experience encompassed the rise to highest office and fall from company favour, the latter in an era of failing economy and emergent industrial conflict at the mine. The paper explores his pragmatic use of authority at management level and also as it impacted on the workers. A sometimes visionary for the industry, Richard dealt with the challenges of production, marketing, and labour that embraced the wider sphere of the union movement. However, to his detriment, he was not privy to the inner politics of a profit directed Board. In collapsing time to attempt an interpretation of the era and the man behind the Richard persona, the paper begs questions

of perceived character flaw and the ultimate vulnerability of power.

Greg Dickens

A Hundred Years of Mining in Tasmania

Mining in Tasmania has a long and varied history. The Tasmanian aborigines were the first to become involved, mining flints, salt and ochre on a small scale. However, it was the result of the 1851 gold rush in Victoria that stimulated an interest in local mineral exploration. The first payable gold was found at Mangana in the northeast in 1852 and this was soon followed by the discovery of hundreds of small to medium sized alluvial and lode gold deposits in the surrounding areas.

The most important mineral discovery occurred in 1871, when a large tin deposit was located at Mt. Bischoff. This led to the progressive discovery of the other major West Coast mineral fields at Corinna, Heemskirk, Zeehan, Dundas, Lyell, Rosebery and Farrell. Since 1903, there have been few significant mineral discoveries, with the exception of King Island, Rossarden, Cleveland, Savage River, Que River, Hellyer and more recently, the Henty Gold Mine.

With an estimated 4,000 mines and prospects, it indicates that Tasmania is highly mineralised for its size, and with some of the above-mentioned producers it has mines of world class in terms of grade and production. The intention of this paper is to provide a brief history of the major mining developments in Tasmania during the first hundred years of European settlement.

Denise Gaughwin

Managing Historic Mining Sites in Tasmania's Wood production Forests

The long-term management of mining heritage presents a number of challenges in wood production forests. The nature of much of the historic mining means that large areas of the landscape contain workings and processing areas. These have been abandoned long enough to have mature forests covering the sites. As the forest industry moves from harvesting native forest and regeneration to clear fall and plantation development, the number of competing interests for the land increases. Water races present another land management difficulty as they may criss-cross many harvesting coupes.

This paper will outline the problems in managing these competing interests and the methods employed to ensure effective management of significant sites for the future. Management options include generating as full an inventory as possible, field recording of sites, assessing the significance, and developing management options. The principles of the Burra Charter are embodied in the Forest Practice Code and guide the management of these sites. On-site management is promoted as a first option, with avoidance of sites normally recommended. Removal of component sites is only recommended as a last resort.

Geoff Hansen

The Chinese on the Cape River Gold Field, North Queensland

Tense race relations between Chinese and Europeans feature largely in the historiography on north Queensland's nineteenth century gold fields. Although varying in degrees of moderation, the relevant works provide a single message - the tensions were the result of white racism. Research on the Cape River gold field (north Queensland's first viable field discovered in 1867) revealed that there was another side to Chinese-European relations on the Cape. Predictably, there were records of some clashes between Chinese and European diggers. However, the research also revealed that harmonious relationships existed in various ways. The evidence signals another side to Chinese-European relations on north Queensland's gold fields. While not denying the importance of racism on these fields, this new evidence may help contribute to a more balanced presentation of Chinese-European relations.

Richard G. Hartley

Filter Presses and Vacuum Filters in Kalgoorlie's rise to World leadership in Gold Metallurgy 1901 - 1908

The 1900s were years of remarkable creativity and innovation in Kalgoorlie gold metallurgy. New types of equipment for processing the telluride-containing sulphide ores were introduced in rapid succession and competition for cost reductions led to process costs being reduced by a factor of three between 1901 and 1905.

Kalgoorlie's most important contribution to gold metallurgy was not so much the introduction and refinement of new equipment such as the filter press and the tube mill, but rather the development of a new approach to ore treatment. In this sphere, all ore was processed as slimes in what was initially called the 'Australian all-sliming process'. Essential to success was the use of equipment that was

capable of holding cyanided slimes while gold was removed from them in solution. The Kalgoorlie filter press was rapidly adopted for this purpose on many goldfields around the world, except in the USA where the type of equipment most favoured was the vacuum filter.

This paper looks at the competitive international development of the two filtering systems and, in particular, at the Ridgway vacuum filter, the first fully automatic continuous-flow vacuum filter in the world. This system replaced filter presses at Kalgoorlie's leading mine, the Great Boulder, in 1906. The history of the rapid international adoption of the Ridgway filter and its equally rapid fall from favour offer some interesting insights into the international nature of mining between 1900 and 1915. It also highlights the disadvantages faced by Australian inventors trying to market new technologies, especially those that were technically far in advance of others in general use.

Nic Haygarth

The Life and Times of James 'Philosopher' Smith up until 1876

As discoverer of tin at Mt Bischoff, James 'Philosopher' Smith is probably the most important figure in the history of mining in Tasmania. Mt Bischoff was not only an enormous economic boost to the colony, but provided the impetus to exploration which resulted in the discovery of the rich western mining province, including tin at Renison Bell, and the Zeehan silver-lead field, Mt Lyell.

Smith is not as well known as his discoveries. Earnest, scrupulous and scholarly, he is regarded almost as a saint in Tasmania. This paper provides a careful insight into his character and speculates as to how it developed. Focus will concentrate on the most active part of Smith's life up until his resignation as a director of the Mt Bischoff Tin Mining Company in 1876. By this time he had married, settled down and given up long prospecting tours. Regarded as the elder statesman of mining in Tasmania, prospectors found in him a model of industry and perseverance. One of his proteges was George Renison Bell.

As well as painting a picture of Smith's life and his influence over Tasmanian mining, the paper also discusses his early mining career and experiences in the bush. Particular reference will be made to his geological activities on the learning grounds of the Penguin-Dial Range and Forth River-Middlesex areas

Adrian Hutton and Leonie Knapman

Problems Associated with the Mining of Kerosene Shale at Glen Davis

Although the mining of kerosene shale (torbanite) took place near Glen Davis, New South Wales, during the latter part of the 1800s, it was not a major part of Australia's kerosene shale mining history until World War II when the venture came into existence because of an act of the Commonwealth Government of Australia.

Kerosene shale mining at Glen Davis is closely linked with that at Newnes. Built in 1905, Newnes was the hub of the Australian oil industry from then until the 1920s. Retorting started there in June 1911 but technical and financial difficulties brought operations to a stop four months later. Other sporadic attempts at mining were undertaken after this but the high cost of production and labour problems forced the company to close in January 1923. During the 1930s there were a number of attempts to re-establish the Newnes site but in 1938 the works were moved to Newnes North. This site became Glen Davis.

In this paper we look at a number of problems that beset the fledgling Glen Davis venture and the engineering projects that were undertaken to solve these. In all cases, one question has to be asked: were the solutions in the best interests of Glen Davis and its people, workers and families alike?

Greg Jackman

90 years at the Marie Louise: Cycles of Tin Scratching and Head Scratching on Blue Tier

The Marie Louise formation on the Blue Tier tin-field, North East Tasmania, was the focus for dozens of discrete prospecting and mining operations from the 1870s to the 1960s. Early opportunistic surface mining by local syndicates developed into moderately capitalised industrial operations during the 1890s boom, before regressing again into small scale fossicking activities predicated on lines of social allegiance.

The Marie Louise was one of the most consistently misunderstood elements on Blue Tier, and is presented as a case study for charting the impact of local dynasticm on long-lived marginal mining fields.

Roger Kellaway

Oil Shale at the Mersey: The West Bank 1924-1934

Oil shale was discovered in Northwest Tasmania in 1851. Early attempts were made to exploit the deposit but significant development occurred only after1910. The first retorts were located on the east bank of the Mersey River at the point where it exits the Great Bend. Whilst the original company was not a success, this site became the focus of the dozen companies that followed in attempting to produce crude oil by the distillation of tasmanite. However, the history of operations on the east bank is almost incomprehensible. Company after company littered the landscape with shafts, adits, tramways and retorts without any discernible strategy.

My aim is to investigate operations on the west bank of the Mersey. This location, directly opposite the above site, has two advantages. Firstly, it is significantly less complex having had only three companies involved in retorting over a ten-year period. Secondly, the works established by the Australian Shale Oil Corporation in 1924 were erected at a grand scale. The company's retorts were intended to process all the shale mined in Tasmania. It was the intention of the State Government that this facility would overcome the chronic problem of small, under-resourced companies attempting to mine, distil and refine on their own account. The establishment of this "monopoly" was immediately controversial and eventually unsuccessful. The Bronder retort, like all others on the field, worked efficiently for only a short period. The company was forced to cease operations in 1928 after producing only 65,000 gallons of crude. The property was taken over by L and N (Tas) Ltd in 1929 and the Shale Oil Demonstrating Company in 1932 with similar lack of success.

Ruth Kerr

Ruffashell Street and the Tin Battery at Rocky Bluffs on the Stannary Hills Tramway, 1902

The Stannary Hills tramway in the Cairns Hinterland stimulates excitement and curiosity from both historians and railway enthusiasts. Constructed in 1902 by a South Australian company, the Stannary Hills tramway extended 14 miles from Boonmoo on the Chillagoe railway an had a branch line from Stannary Hills to Rocky Bluffs on the Walsh River. The tin battery there operated from 1903 to the early 1920s and a town that included a school, sprang up around the battery in the period 1905 to 1911. The town, tramway and battery are all typically representative of the raw frontier of north Queensland mining investment, social life and engineering developments. This paper surveys the role that the Rocky Bluffs town and mill played in the north Queensland mining industry and assesses the significance of the site today."

Barry McGowan

The Chinese on the goldfields – a case study in stereotypes and historical neglect

When discussing the Chinese on the goldfields almost all historians refer to the more sensational incidents such as the Lambing Flat and Buckland riots and the violent and racist nature of the goldfields fraternity. A few historians acknowledge that most contemporary observers found the Chinese to be law abiding, hardworking and honest but say little else. Lydon, Ryan and Bell have commented upon the narrow focus of most historians in this area. Ryan for example, comments that the 'token fragments' of Chinese experiences in Australian histories reveal stereotypes of Chinese in various roles as coolies, gold-diggers, market gardeners and cooks. She states that the histories ignore the different cultural backgrounds of the Chinese and the different conditions and circumstances to which they responded. Peter Bell has commented that it is unusual for the amateur historian to give other than an updated version of the nineteenth century stereotype of the Chinese and that what we read now is usually bigoted, at best condescending.In the paper, the often conflicting evidence for racist based violence on the goldfields will be discussed, as will the broader question of race relationships, and the wider contribution of the Chinese to Australia's economic and cultural life. Examples will be taken from more recent studies, in particular in southern New South Wales and northeast Victoria. I will suggest strongly that in hiding behind a number of convenient stereotypes, historians generally have missed an important opportunity to make a serious contribution on the role of the Chinese in colonial and post-colonial Australian society.

John Miedecke

Heritage issues associated with the re-opening of the Historic Beaconsfield Gold Mine

The Beaconsfield gold mine located in the township of Beaconsfield in Northern Tasmania operated from the late 1880s to 1914. It was famous for its high-grade ore

body, water inflows and the associated pumping equipment, which was state of the art at the time. After its closure in 1914, the mine site progressively fell into disrepair as old mine buildings and shafts collapsed. By the late 1970s, the only remains were the magnificent brick mine buildings. These buildings are listed by the National Trust and are on the register of the National Estate.

Since 1979, various companies have been involved with the reopening of the shaft and dewatering of the old workings in order to develop the famous Tasmania reef below. Now in 1999, seventy-five years after its closure, the mine has reopened by the Beaconsfield Mine Joint Venture and modern mining is progressing beneath the historic 455 metre level.

The paper addresses heritage issues associated with the mine's reopening, in particular the magnificent mine buildings constructed from 1903 to 1904. The subsequent recovery and display of Cornish pumping equipment (the only ones of their type on the surface of the world) and other items of heritage are also covered. Of the three mine buildings, two are now part of the Grubb Shaft Museum and the other, the Hart Shaft building, has now been refurbished and is the production winder house.

Jan Penney
The Australasian Number 2 Mining Disaster: Can we do it nightly?

One of the worst mining disasters in Australian mining history occurred at Creswick in 1882 when 27 men were trapped underground as a result of a drive suddenly flooding. Only five men survived this terrible ordeal. The others slowly drowned or were asphyxiated, several leaving haunting messages for their loved ones who waited on the surface. The heroic rescue efforts involved the boiler engine driver who pushed his boilers past all acceptable limits to try and lower the water level. Men trapped underground who cared for their mates until they died. Navy divers who rushed to the scene via steam train but brought lines which were too short and diving suits not able to be used. Teams of fellow miners working for days to reach the survivors. And one of the largest funerals in the district.

At Sovereign Hill we have often wished to present this story to our visitors to demonstrate the dangers of Deep Lead mining and the ever-present risks of death. Our success with our night show, Blood on the Southern Cross, has convinced us that our audiences respond to a strongly dramatic historical story based on fact. But the question is can we do something similar with this event. How to tell this story in such a way that we highlight the heroism of the participants without reducing the dramatic impact? How to develop dramatic effects which impress the visitor, yet not demean the story? How to keep to the facts of the event, yet develop it into a meaningful experience for our visitors? In short - can we do it nightly?

Lou Rae
Abt Railway: Its role in the development of the Mt Lyell Mining Field

The Abt Railway was the first of two such systems constructed in Australia and connected the mining town of Queenstown with the seaport of Regatta Point, located near Strahan on Macquarie Harbour.

Built, operated and owned by the Mt Lyell Mining and Railway Company Limited the railway was the lifeblood for the mines in the Mt Lyell area and the communities that had developed around these operations. Rail traffic was the only means of access into and out of Queenstown up until 1932 and, consequently, the railway played an integral role in the every day lifestyles of most people.

Finally, in 1963, the railway was closed after sixty-seven years of continual service. The route which passed through some of the most spectacular countryside in Tasmania was left to become overgrown amid the rainforest. The many bridges had also begun to decay and by the 1990's many had fallen down making walking the route a difficult exercise.

In 1998, the Commonwealth Government approved funding for the restoration of the railway. Work has now progressed on the necessary planning and studies stages and by July 1999, the tenders are ready to be let for the construction of the railway.

This paper looks at the history of the railway, its operational links with the Mt Lyell Company's mining activities and the everyday role it played in the lives of those living in Queenstown. It will also cover various developmental and cultural heritage issues and will include an update in the construction process.

The paper is supported by slide and historical video films (of limited duration).

Glyn Roberts

Professionals and the Tasmanian Government in the Early Development of the Metal Mining Industry

The paper examines some of the problems faced by professional geologists and surveyors in the Tasmanian public service during the second half of the nineteenth century. Five will be considered: three geologists, Charles Gould, Gustav Thureau and Alexander Montgomery, and two surveyors, Charles Sprent and E. A. Counsell. Each faced problems in maintaining professional standards in the face of interference by Ministers of Lands and Works, and departmental heads. The latter officials were often unable or unwilling to relate to their professional staff or perceive the long-term value of systematic and careful recording of fundamental data for use by prospectors and mining companies.

Gould was diverted from his stated task as Government Geologist to conduct mineral searches for gold. Various Ministers failed to understand Thureau's Germanic background and attitudes nor to appreciate his professional standing as a mining engineer and geologist. Montgomery built on the achievements of his colleagues but was driven out by financial stringencies.

The two surveyors, Sprent and Counsell, struggled with the total failure by their superiors to recognise and react to changing circumstances and consequently Tasmania did not build upon and improve the good basic survey principles set up in the 1850s. Successive Ministers were unwilling to spend sufficient money to cope adequately with the volume of work and the accuracy required for the high standards required to service the mining industry.

Peter Ryle

Elusive Black Gold: The Search for Coal in The Cooktown Area

The mining industry in North Queensland during the first fifty years of European occupancy is best remembered for the discovery and exploitation of gold resources in areas such as Normanton, Croydon, Charters Towers, and the Palmer River. The gold retrieved from these districts undoubtedly helped the Colony of Queensland achieve economic stability. However, the history of other minerals, like copper and coal, exposed a significant predisposition on the part of many mining entrepreneurs of the period to make decisions based on feeling, rather than on scientific exploration. The Chillagoe Smelter and it's associated infrastructure, and the Mount Molloy Smelter and railway, are prime examples of the results of insufficient exploration work prior to investment.

Attempts to exploit coal reserves in the Cooktown district were in stark contrast to the Chillagoe and Mount Molloy experiences. Entrepreneurs here continued to invest funds in spite of scientific investigations that consistently reported the field as not viable. Logan Jack inspected many surface coal deposits in the district and expressed doubt as to their prospects. Subsequent exploration by diamond drill confirmed his opinions. Despite these results, investors continued to have faith that "black diamonds" would replace gold as an economic generator for Cooktown.

The first attempt to establish a coal mining industry in the Cooktown area occurred soon after the town was settled. Despite the euphoria surrounding the project, it failed to live up to expectations. Coal again came into prominence when the Cooktown to Maytown railway was debated in Parliament. Proponents of the railway claimed that coal reserves near the proposed route would provide fuel for the trains, and revenue from cartage of the coal for export. The railway proceeded to Laura, but the promised coalmines never eventuated. Since that time, successive miners have attempted in vain to prove viable reserves. As recently as the 1980s, miners attempted to locate a viable coal deposit in the Cooktown district. They were no more successful than their predecessors.

Sachiko Sone

Japanese Coal Mining – Social life and relationship son the Chikuho coalfield from the late nineteenth century to recent times.

The Japanese coal-mining industry was phased out from the 1950s and ended on 30th March 1997 with the closure of the Miike mine, Japan's largest coal mine. Until recently, despite a history extending over 100 years, Japanese historians have shown little interest in the industry and especially in social and labour aspects. The strong Marxian school in particular paid little attention to industrial relations in the industry because non-unionisation of the miners suggested a lack of militancy and because prudishness probably made them resistant to the sexual nature of gender relationships commonly recognised among the coal mining fraternity.

More recently, has come an interest in the social configurations of Japanese

industrialisation. From collections of oral materials coming out of the 1960s a wealth of information has highlighted many aspects of popular culture that are proving invaluable to historians. Primary among materials released in 1997 were work songs, which for the first time revealed the arduous life of the miners and the forms of resistance undertaken to ease the burden. My interest, in particular, lies with the voices of the women who worked alongside the men. Turning to the issue of voice – unlike men, women above ground had no time, no public space and no authority to express their feelings. Below ground, women sang while they worked with the men. Their themes include topics both anticipated and surprising: the gruesome labour conditions; relationship to contract bosses; comic songs; songs against social prejudice; and women's songs about love and sexuality.

The paper attempts to illuminate the social world of Japanese coal miners through a gendered cultural history approach, together with the techniques of oral history, including a consideration of poetics as told through the work songs.

Steve Sorrell

Mt Bischoff – Mountain of Tin

For many years, the Mt Bischoff mine, discovered by James 'Philosopher' Smith in 1871, was one of the world's richest tin mines. From 1878, regular dividends were paid to shareholders, with several of them making fortunes. James Smith was not among them.

Originally, the tin ore was treated by sluicing and then crushing as the ore grades fell and the rock became harder. By 1914, forty stampers, each of 1,000lbs capacity were in operation. The ore was so rich in places that it was simply shovelled into bags and shipped to the smelters located in Launceston.

From about 1910, the grade of ore began to decline, and with tin prices falling heavily in 1914, the mine operated at a financial loss. From about 1929, the mine was worked on tribute, until the demand for tin rose in World War 2, when it was worked by the Commonwealth Government.

After 70 years of continuous production, the Mt Bischoff mine, the mountain of tin, finally closed in 1947. Since then, mining ventures have only been spasmodic. Exploratory drilling, however, has indicated that there are still substantial reserves of ore, perhaps more than six million tonnes. If only the price of tin would rise!

For those interested in mineralogy, more than 100 different mineral species have been recorded from Mt Bischoff. These include aesthetic specimens of colourless, blue, green or purple fluorite, radiating topaz crystals, cassiterite nuggets of many kilograms in weight, as well as rare minerals such as ralstonite, sellaite, bavenite, and prosopite. Steve will take us through 100 years of mining history of the 'Mountain of Tin', and will show some of the minerals that have been and still can be found there.

Ian Terry

Bricks and Mortar: Convict Quarrying on Maria Island

In 1825, a convict station was established on Maria Island, lying off Tasmania's east coast. The convicts sent there were those who had committed further crimes after arrival in the colony. Within a few years, clay and limestone were being quarried to make the bricks and mortar required to build structures more permanent than the original log and plaster huts. Nearby brick clamps and limekilns were used to process the raw material which was sent to Hobart with the aim of establishing an island industry. A sandstone quarry on the waters edge provided 'freestone' for stone buildings.

The physical evidence of this mining activity remains on the island, albeit in places obliterated by quarrying and mining in the late nineteenth century and the 1920s. The paper explains the history of convict quarrying on the island with a brief reference to the physical remains extant today.

James Verrier

Development and Decline of a Mining Town: Balfour, 1906-21

Alluvial tin was discovered on the Balfour Mining Field in the late nineteenth century but it was copper that spurred its growth in the early decades of this century. Like so many other fields, Balfour promised much but delivered little. Only one mine, the Reward Mine, ever succeeded in producing copper ore for sale. Its initial success led others to take up leases in the area. A speculation boom occurred and by 1909, the Balfour mining field stretched from the Arthur River to the Pieman, a distance of over 50 kilometres.

In spite of the size of the field, only one town emerged as a population centre. Not surprisingly, the town grew next to the Reward Mine. It inherited the name of the field, Balfour. The speculation boom ensured that both the town and the field would receive more

attention than they truly warranted. To the present day, myth and half truths have created a picture of a town of not less than 1,000 souls whose fortunes vanished overnight with the copper ore of the Reward Mine just at the time an epidemic forced a mass exodus of inhabitants. As is often the case, the truth is less glamorous than fiction. None the less, the history of the town of Balfour is a familiar mining town story.

As befits a mining town, Balfour developed a strong community spirit. Sporting and cultural groups reflected the diversity of interest among the inhabitants. The town's temporary structures belied the strong belief of residents of the town's future but were demonstrative of the speed with which Balfour grew. As a feature of that growth, the town suffered the effects of unplanned development and unreliable communication with the settled districts. These problems were never properly resolved as Balfour's fortunes died with the mines it serviced. Its population had peaked at roughly 300 in the period 1912-14. By the 1921 census, the town had only 46 residents and Balfour took its place among Tasmania's glorious mining failures. The paper recounts the social history of Balfour, and in doing so, reveals the links between the town and the principal mine.

David White

Prelude to black coal mining by the State in Victoria

The black coal potential of Victoria had been known since the 1840s, principally from sea cliff exposures at Cape Patterson and Kilcunda. The limiting factors in development of the resource had been the lack of railway transport, poor government geological research and adverse official opinions of the quality of Victorian coal. Despite the vigour of Parliamentary Committees and Royal Commissions, the provision of rail subsidies and sidings, encouragement of private tramways and head hunting for coal mine managers in the West of Scotland, Victoria's independence from New South Wales coal production had been put to question. This occurred in1903 with the 'lamentable strike of coal miners' in Victoria, which reduced an annual output of 225,000 tonnes in 1902 to only 64,000 tonnes.

Common opinion would claim the prime cause for State Government establishing a publicly owned coalmine in November 1909, as being the then current New South Wales coal strike. However, for some time, Australian Labor and New Zealand Labour Party policy had been set to bring coal mining into the public sector. In Victoria, a report on readily mined black coal resources had been forwarded to Premier Bent in November 1907. By the time the immediate intention was announced by Minister for Mines, Peter McBride, on 15 June 1909, Crown Land at Wonthaggi had already been reserved to the Government for coal mining purposes. The apogee of activity at the State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi, occurred in 1929-1930 with 662,000 tonnes being produced by some 1,800 personnel.

This paper sets out to examine parochialism and political patronage v the practicalities of private coal production *in explaining* the establishment of the State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi, Victoria.

Lindsay Whitham

The Railways and Tramways of Zeehan

The discovery of rich silver-lead deposits in dense rainforest near Mount Zeehan during 1882 marked the beginning of the boomtown of Zeehan. Within twenty years, the town had grown to hold more than 8,000 inhabitants, which made it Tasmania's third largest centre. Because of the climate and terrain of the area, rail transport became the preferred means of servicing the mining field. In fact, rail provided Zeehan's only link to the rest of Tasmania for the ensuing 50 years.

Railway construction was commenced by the Government in 1892, to connect Zeehan with the port of Strahan on Macquarie Harbour. By 1900, a link had been established with Burnie on the Northwest Coast. Furthermore, there were many government and private lines built to connect Zeehan with surrounding mining fields and to service local mines. Tramways were also established to access nearby timber resources. Zeehan became the railhead for branch lines to the mining communities of Comstock, Renison Bell, Dundas and Williamsford. In addition, there were the privately built narrow gauge tramways that provided a link to numerous mines associated with the Zeehan mining field. As a result, there was a brief period during the early 1900's, when Zeehan was regarded as the busiest railway station in Tasmania.

The paper sets out to illustrate the important role that the railway and tramway network played in the development of the mines and mining communities that surround Zeehan.

Milos Conference – Abstracts Reminder

Just a reminder to those wishing to present papers at the 5th International Mining History Congress, Milos, Greece, 13-17 September 2001, that abstracts should be forwarded to the organisers by **31st January 2000**. Send to:

Heliotopos Professional Congress Organisers, Terphsihoris 38, 175 62 Paleo Faliro, Athens, Greece.

Some pre/post Congress tours have already been mooted, including a variety of cruises to Greek Islands and Turkey, trips to Santorini, Mykanos or Crete, as well as visits to Delphi, Olympia, other famous historic sites, and of course visits to ancient mining sites. For further details see the web site:

http://www.heliotopos.net/conf/imhc/index.htm

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