



*Preserving & promoting Goldfields history*

## **EASTERN GOLDFIELDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

### **SUMMER NEWSLETTER December 2017 – No. 17**

#### **From the President**

Welcome to another newsletter! As 2017 draws to a close we can look back and acknowledge what a big year it has been for the Society!

The great financial support we have received from the City of Kalgoorlie Boulder has given us the much needed impetus to continue and advance our plans to preserve and promote our unique heritage. With thanks to the City's funding, the engagement of our Executive Officer, Lucia Pichler, at the beginning of the year has been everything we could have possibly hoped for! And our ongoing digitising project lead by Claire Weir, has unlocked and protected our invaluable collections.

When combined with the selfless efforts of our many volunteers, our levels of service and output have increased dramatically (did I mention that our Secretary, Robin Bowden, received a Volunteer Award for her "outstanding achievements to volunteering in Kalgoorlie Boulder"! ) We will continue to build on this success with new funding recently secured and also planned.



2018 will see a good deal of publicity for Kalgoorlie-Boulder to mark its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the Society will be heavily involved in marking the occasion throughout the year. Kanowna (Australia's largest Ghost Town!) will also have its anniversary and we aim to celebrate that by seeking a significant grant to implement the findings of our report: the *Kanowna Historic Site and Heritage Trail - Development and Interpretation Plan*.

So, it is rewarding for us to look back on the year with a great deal of satisfaction - but also to have an eye on the future for us to continue this momentum.

Season's Greetings to All!

*Scott Wilson*

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#### **Important Dates**

Eastern Goldfields Historical Society Members' and family **Christmas Gathering** is on Sunday 17 December 2017 at Tracy & Paul Browning's home at 5pm. We're looking forward to celebrating the season and sharing some good times together.

The Eastern Goldfields Historical Society will be **closed from 18 December 2017 to 14 January 2018** inclusive. January is usually a quiet time, so we will use the first week back to mount a tidy up of the back storage area. Any help with moving items and cleaning during that week (15-19 January 2018) will be greatly appreciated.

### A year of achievements

As 2017 draws to a close, we take a moment to reflect on a year of wonderful accomplishments.

Probably one of the most significant achievements is the digitisation of around 5,000 images from EGHS' vast resource of negatives, slides and photographs. The complete project will take some years to complete, but we have made a tremendous start.

Another important achievement is the formalizing of collection management and documentation procedures. This includes the process of acquiring new objects/documents/images into the EGHS collection. The Society acquired the collection management software (called MOSAiC) some years ago, and in 2017 we used this to consistently update collection information.

The Historical Society also received a number of grants in 2017. Thank you to the Rotary Club of Boulder for their assistance to purchase a new ladder for the storage area. This is a prosaic item, but much needed to ensure the health and safety of our volunteers.

Two other grants were received. A grant from the National Library of Australia, through their Community Heritage program, assisted with the purchase of materials for the digitisation project. Importantly, we will be able to purchase more archival equipment through a grant from the Federal Government's Stronger Communities Program. This will assist the Society to continue to preserve and share the region's rich history and heritage.



Looking forward to 2018 we hope to finalise our review of EGHS' Strategic Plan, put in submissions to renew the Kanowna Heritage Project, continue the digitisation project and participate in the celebration of 125 years since the discovery of gold by Patrick Hannan.

A safe and happy Christmas and New Year to all members, volunteers, supporters and families!

### Volunteers at the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society

*A big thank you to all EGHS volunteers*, without whom the Society would not be creating the achievements that it is. From January 2017 to the end of November 2017, volunteers contributed 3,176 ½ hours, which, worked out at a modest \$25 per hour is the equivalent of \$79,412.50 in kind support to the Society.

Volunteers worked across all areas of the Society's activities:

- Reception and customer service
- Research requests (on-line and utilising the Society's extensive archives)
- Photographic requests (researching, scanning and printing)
- Digitising the image collection
- Cataloguing and collating collection documentation
- Administration
- Implementing preventive conservation to collection items
- Library services
- Repairs, maintenance and gardening
- Cleaning and working bees
- Participating in community events
- Boulder Town Hall tours





From left: Scott Wilson, Jan Lamont, EO Lucia Pichler, Ross Quartermaine, Bev Quartermaine and John Rees



Volunteers enjoying afternoon tea at Tippet's Café in Boulder



Maggi Clark: putting her hand to lots of jobs!



Pam Moore and Anne Skinner the talk of a guest speaker (Barry Aslett in the background)



*Congratulations* to EGHS Secretary Robin Bowden on her recent "outstanding achievement as a Volunteer in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Community" Award

Eastern Goldfields  
Historical Society  
Volunteers at  
work!

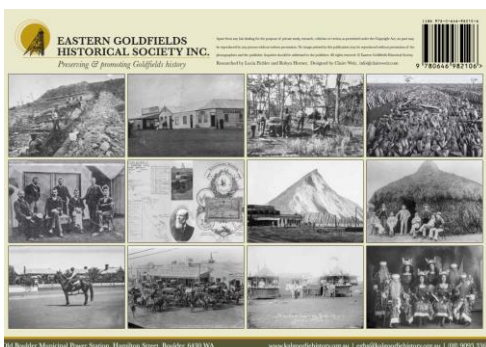


Rob Wall conducting a Boulder Town Hall tour



Re-organising the front office: Ross Quartermaine and Lindsay Stockdale

## Eastern Goldfields Historical Society 2018 Calendars

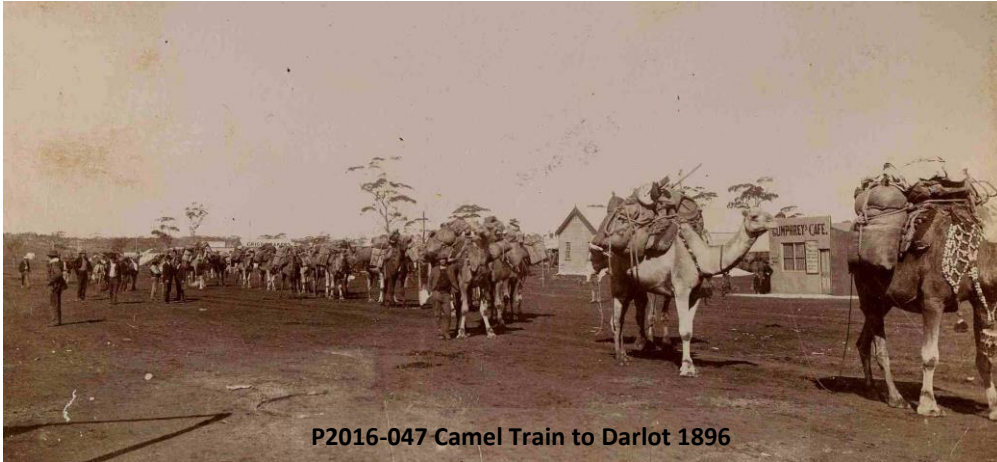


They have been a while coming, but watch out for these calendars, available in the very near future for \$16.50.

The calendars feature unique historic images from the EGHS image collection. They will be a great gift for the New Year and a perfect keepsake of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of gold in Kalgoorlie-Boulder in 2018.

## Murder Most Foul

When the Grigo Family arrived in Coolgardie in 1892, the 'Old Camp' as it was known then, was still young and raw around the edges. The times were generically described as the "roar-in' drunk days of the Old Camp". Hessian was the most common building material and water or lack of it the major problem.



P2016-047 Camel Train to Darlot 1896

The Afghan cameleers transported goods and materials from the coast through to the inland towns and mines, and due to their lower costs did so at rates far cheaper than the European teamsters could match.

This was one bone of contention between the teamsters and the Afghans and the use of water was another, with violent clashes over camels muddying the soaks and drinking them dry. The loud snorting, belching and vomiting beasts could travel for days on little water and live off the native vegetation, but their noise and habits around the town brought abuse to the camels and cameleers alike.

Dost Mahomet was a cameleer who worked in partnership with his brother Jourack. They were natives of Beluchistan, a great desert plateau lying between what was called Persia and is now Iran, and India, and Afghanistan and the Arabian Sea. When Mr Grigo discovered his fifteen year old daughter Annie Charlotte had become friendly with Dost Mahomet he was furious, declaring she was never to see Dost again.

At the first opportunity Annie escaped to Dost's camp at the end of Bailey Street, whereupon he put her on the back of a fast camel and the couple eloped. The alarm was raised and her father and the troopers chased after them on horseback, only giving up when the horses could go no further.

Annie Charlotte Grigo and Dost Mohamet settled in Port Hedland where he did well financially. The couple had five children and although never forgiven by her father, her mother kept in touch with Annie. At one stage it was reported that Dost owned 35 camels and property with a two roomed house in Port Hedland. Annie had a pleasant nature and was well liked, but Dost could be a moody and bad tempered man, who was a fierce enemy but a good friend.

Probably it was after the death of her father that Annie's family moved to Port Hedland. It was here in 1908 that her husband and two brothers, Bill and Harry, were involved in a brawl which is said to have started when Dost was beating his wife in one of his tempers. The brothers claimed they were acting in self-defense when their younger brother picked up a piece of wood and hit Dost on the back of the head, fracturing his skull. He later died in hospital.

In 1909 the brothers were charged with the murder of Dost Mohamet but at trial were acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. Annie Charlotte did not testify.



Jourack was named as Dost's Executor, and although it was said Dost owned a large number of camels and a considerable amount of property at the time of his death, when Jourack filed the probate statement he indicated that Dost had very little money. Jourack persuaded Annie to travel to India to receive financial assistance, promising her the children would receive an English education.

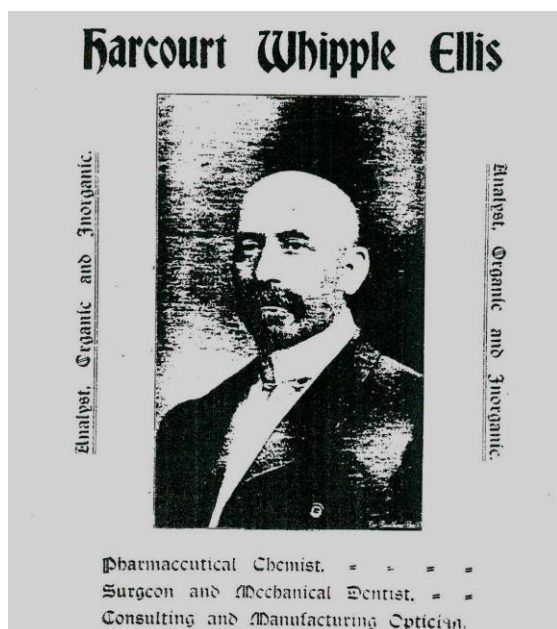
Letters from Annie in Karachi to her mother indicate that although initially Dost's relatives put some blame on her for his death, they then were friendly towards her and she became happier with her situation. However things must have changed, as in 1910 it is reported that Annie visited a Magistrate who issued a proclamation that the family be taken into the custody of the crown and be returned to Australia (at this time India was under British rule). That night three men broke into her house and fatally stabbed Annie Charlotte to death in her bed. The murder was witnessed by some of the children and in a statement to police, her eldest son named relatives Gool Mahomet, Carda Bux and Rozzi as the perpetrators.

Before the trial the boy changed his testimony and claimed he could not identify his mother's murderers, and the men were acquitted.

Charges of perjury were laid against the fifteen year old boy but he could not be located. He remained in India, but his four siblings were taken into custody and became wards of the State of Western Australia, where they returned to live.

*Faye Jones, Research Coordinator*

*Information from Philip Jones' "Australian Muslim Cameleers", family research by George Anning, and from police reports and newspaper articles.*



Harcourt Whipple Ellis is first recorded in WA practicing as consulting pharmacist in Hannan's in the late 1800s. He set up in two tents, using the front as a consulting room and the rear as living quarters.

He was a colourful character and is said to have resembled King Edward VII to a marked degree. He always dressed in the style of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) and kept a picture of the King in the pharmacy. He was pleased when patients made comment about the similarity.

He even carried it to the point of draping his front windows in purple cloth when the King died and placing a notice on the front door saying that the premises would be closed for a period of mourning because of a death in the family.

Notwithstanding these regal pretensions, Ellis was a man of action. Several Cornish miners recognised him as a strike breaker from Broken Hill and proceeded to shoot up his consulting room. Ellis appeared out of the rear tent with a pistol in one hand and a heavy pestle in the other. He shot one of the intruders in the arm and the police arrived to prevent further carnage.

He claimed the shot was aimed at one Phil Shedden, who had annoyed him two years previously. He was not prosecuted but moved on to Roebourne, probably after being told to leave the area by the police.

*John Rees, Honorary Curator*



Following on from John Rees' article about this former chemist in Kalgoorlie, an excerpt about the book *Harcourt Whipple Ellis: An Outrageous Life* by Robert Cox and Philippa Martyr further tells the story:

“Ellis' careers as an engineer, inaugural registered dentist and chemist, lively goldfields journalist and would-be scourge of the Western Australian government's Forrest administration, outrageous fantasist, and teller of tall tales (mostly about himself), all helped to mask a grimmer reality: that of quack doctor, illegal abortionist, adulterer and wife deserter. He is quite possibly the only person in the State's history - or indeed Australian history - to have both run for parliament and be tried twice for murder. Yet through it all, Ellis seems to have preserved an insouciance and attitude of noblesse oblige that kept everyone guessing about his real origins.”

