



Preserving & promoting Goldfields history

EASTERN GOLDFIELDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER June 2019 – No. 20

What's in this Newsletter?

From Scott Wilson, President.....	p1	Library Note, Jan Lamont	p5
New: King Battery Paper in Library Archive	p2	John Boileau, John Rees	p5
"I'm gone, I'm gone" by Anne Skinner	p3	Scott Whitaker, Author Talk on Railway Hotels	p7
Red Dust Revival, Lake Perkolilli	p4	Skylab, 40 th Anniversary at Esperance Museum	p7
AGM 21 August 2019	p4	EGHS Calendar of Events.....	p8

Executive Officer position – a resounding success! *Scott Wilson, President EGHS*

The Society is delighted to have again been awarded funding for the continuation of our Executive Officer.

The City of Kalgoorlie Boulder has informed us of their continuing support for another three years to fund the position and to assist with our operating costs. I'm sure our members would agree that the Council has been very supportive of Heritage initiatives in the Eastern Goldfields and we are very grateful for their continuing support. Our sincere thanks to the Councilors and staff at the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Our recent celebrations and collaborations with the City for the 125th anniversary of the discovery of gold in Kalgoorlie-Boulder show that when provided with the resources to do so, we can 'unlock our archives and knowledge'. This gives us the ability to continue with one of our key goals of strengthening Heritage Tourism within the region. Also, the fact that we are open every week day has provided a great impetus for us to help realise our full potential.

We undertook a review of some of our key performance indicators since the City supported the Executive Officer position some three years ago:

- A 43% increase in EGHS membership – up to 140 members
- A record in volunteer hours – up to 320 hours per month
- Close to 12,000 images digitised
- Visitor numbers are up by over 200%

These figures are just some of the ways we can show the increasing engagement that the Society has had with the community and the greater public.

The concept of the Executive Officer began with the need to more fully showcase our vast resources and to tell the story of our history/heritage in a meaningful way. We had the desire and importantly the volunteer base to see it through. With the engagement of Lucia Pichler and her professionalism we are pleased to say the position has been a resounding success for us.

As members and friends of the Society would know – Lucia is sadly leaving us shortly. I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for the great role that she has played in achieving so much for us.

Her varied skills and welcoming personality have been just what was needed to ensure this key role within the Society got off to the start that was required. She leaves us with a wealth of knowledge and protocols for our new Executive Officer to draw upon. Thanks Lucia! from all of us at the Society.

Please join us for a few farewell drinks by the fire at the Hannan's Club, Tuesday 25th June, 5.30pm.

King Battery Site, near Kalgoorlie/Kambalda WA



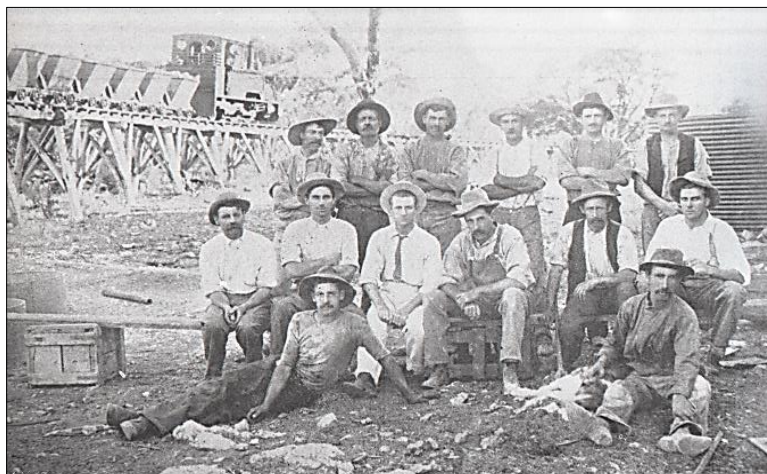
King Battery, Hampton Plains. Photographer Ideal Studio, 1903
EG-N-017-010A

EGHS recently received a copy of a paper about King Battery, located at Woolibar Station, written by Dr S E Close. The Battery is on the Register of Heritage Places, as a Permanent Entry, by the Heritage Council of WA (2005). Its heritage significance is due to the rarity of the remains of its gold treatment plant, dating from the early 1900s.

In the paper Dr Close provides “an explanation of the Battery as it most likely operated and as it is today”. She

describes the role and background of Ernest Lidgey, who was associated with the site and the Hampton Plains Estate Ltd. Contemporaneous newspaper reports of him, quoted in the paper, were not very positive.

It is ironic that the site remains today because it is not located on or adjacent to a gold deposit, not one event which would be economic today . . . The site's significance today is its rarity. It is the most complete gold treatment plant remains in the Kalgoorlie region dating from the early 1900s that includes the foundations of a cyanide plant.



Group of Employees at King Battery, Hampton Plains Estate.
Photographer Ideal Studio, 1903.
EG-N-017-011A

The paper (reference 6.105.2) is a most interesting read and now forms part of our Library Research Archives. The Archives are a wonderfully diverse research resource, collated by EGHS volunteers over its past nearly 75 years' history. The Archive can be accessed during normal open hours (weekday 9am to 2pm), on Boulder Market Days or after hours by appointment.

'I'm gone, I'm gone!' Freak accident kills miner at South Kalgurli*Researched and written by Anne Skinner*

It started out just like any other day underground. On 30 May 1929 experienced miners Antonio Maffina and James Giri descended to the 300 metre level of the south-east stope at the South Kalgurli mine to begin their day shift. As they always did before commencing to bore into the wall of the stope, they sounded the rock face. It seemed perfectly safe, so the pair started work.

A few hours later James stopped to fix the screw in the drill. Behind him, Antonio began using the scraper on the rock face. Then James heard something strike the machine's bar. He turned round to see his mate lying on the floor of the stope clutching his stomach in agony. "I'm gone, I'm gone," Antonio gasped. James ran for help and the injured miner was rushed to the surface where the mine's first aid officer, William Hill, treated him before he was taken to St John of God Hospital.

Dr Thomas Byrne could find no external signs of injury but he noted that his patient was in a state of extreme shock and was clearly in acute abdominal pain. Concluding that Antonio was suffering from an internal haemorrhage, the doctor operated and found his stomach to be extensively lacerated and filled with blood.



Underground at the South Kalgurli mine, 1900, Photographer Dwyer Studio. Antonio Maffina was fatally injured in a freak accident at the 300 metre level on 30 May 1929.

EG-N-010-055a

During the next few days the injured miner's condition began to improve, but then the doctor noticed the onset of what he later told the coronial inquest were the symptoms of paralytic ileum – obstruction of the intestine due to paralysis of the internal muscles. Despite the best efforts of the hospital staff, Antonio's condition worsened and he died in the early hours of 7 June.

The following day an inquest into Antonio's death opened in the Boulder Courthouse. Coroner JE Geary examined evidence from everyone who had come into contact with the miner on the day of his death, including workmate James Giri, the police, the shift boss, the first aid staffer, the Australian Workers' Union representative and Dr Byrne. James told the court that a large chunk of

fresh rock found close to where Antonio had collapsed must have come away from the hole they were drilling and fallen onto the scraper, driving it into his stomach.

The jury was taken underground to view the scene of the accident and later returned a verdict of accidental death.

Antonio Maffina was 35 years old when he died. In 1912, at the age of 18, he had migrated alone to Western Australia where he found work on the railways and then in the mines. Seven years later he married Margaret Jane Stevens and the couple settled in Dugan Street, Kalgoorlie, where they raised their two sons, Antonio and Giuseppe. Antonio Maffina lies buried in the Kalgoorlie Cemetery.

- Sources: *Kalgoorlie Miner* 8 & 19 June 1929; Ancestry.com.au

MAFFINA.—In sad but loving memory of our dear father, Antonio Maffina, who died 7th June, 1929, through accident on South Kalgurli mine. No words could express The love and the longing, We have for you, Pappa, dear, But all we can do Is to pray and to wait till the dawn, When our Lord joins us again. Rest in peace, father, dear.

Antonio Maffina's two sons inserted this In Memoriam notice in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on 6 June 1935.

Lake Perkolilli Red Dust Revival 12 -15 September 2019

From 1914 to 1939, an isolated claypan 23km from Kalgoorlie hosted an annual motor racing meeting which became legendary. Lake Perkolilli is a unique, rock hard claypan which has been the location for many Australian speed records. It was almost forgotten until vintage motor racing enthusiasts returned to bring it to life once again.

The Lake Perkolilli Red Dust Revival from 12 to 16 September 2019 will re-live the golden age of motor racing at Australia's oldest motor racing track which is still in its original form. More than 40 motorcycles and 50 vintage racing cars built before 1940 will transform the claypan once again. Everything from Ford Model Ts to Austin Sevens will drive in the spirit of the 1920s and 1930s in an exhibition of outback motor racing at its best.

Entries to participate in the races close soon. Spectators and camping is encouraged, and entry is free. For more detailed information contact:

perkolillimc@gmail.com | www.motoringpast.com.au | <https://www.facebook.com/reddustrevival2019/>

STEP ON THE GAS!



WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO THE LAKE PERKOLILLI RED DUST REVIVAL 2019

NEAR KALGOORLIE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
12 TO 16 SEPTEMBER 2019

SEE YOU THERE!!

MORE INFO: WWW.MOTORINGPAST.COM.AU

EMAIL: PERKOLILLIMC@GMAIL.COM

Eastern Goldfields Historical Society AGM 21 August 2019

Guest Speaker Sue Clarke on "The Charity of Ugly Men"

In the 1900's It was hard for women to break out of the confines of expectations and respectability set by their mothers and grandmothers before them - even with the social freedoms that the Goldfields offered and the fine speeches on the subject made by Margaret Forrest and others. So, often, change came accidentally, and this was the case with the Ugly Men.

This is the story of three sisters and how as 'modern women' of the goldfields they were the unwitting catalysts for the charity of Ugly Men and ultimately the formation of Lotterywest.

Susan Clarke (SRN, (PMH), BA History UWA, Bachelor of Education CTC), is the Great Granddaughter of Amy (Buscombe) Argyle, and Great-niece of Bob Buscombe, Lillian (Buscombe) Brougham and Alicia (Buscombe) Pell whose time in Kalgoorlie spanned 1893-1926.

Please join us for what will be an interesting and engaging talk by Sue Clarke at the Power House for the AGM on Wednesday 21 Augusts 2019 at 7pm.

Library Notes *Jan Lamont, Honorary Librarian*

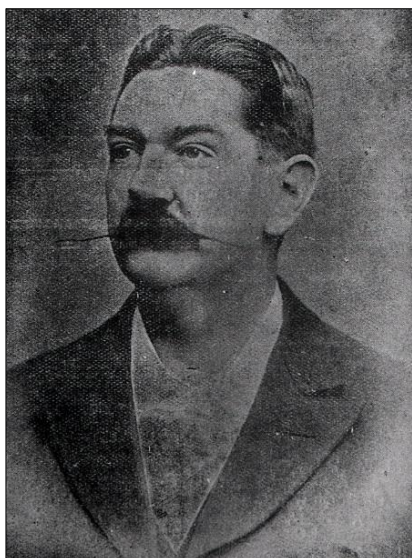
A recent acquisition to our shelves will be of interest to many, especially those that have worked in the nickel industry. “Australia’s Nickel Adventure” by Ross Louthean and Carl Knox-Robinson tells the story of the Australian Nickel Industry, the ups and downs in the metal’s erratic life, from the frenetic days of the nickel boom in the 1960’s through to the present day, and the outlook for the future, also its effect on the exploration industry and the share market.

This book was donated to EGHS by Ross Louthean. Members are able to borrow books from EGHS’ extensive research and general interest about the Goldfields library.

John Boileau, Early Coolgardie Pharmacist, Businessman and Community Member

Committee Member and retired Pharmacist John Rees was the guest speaker at the EGHS General Meeting in February, 2019. He gave a very interesting talk about John Boileau, an early Coolgardie Pharmacist and entrepreneur in the Eastern Goldfields.

“A thirst for adventure lured John Boileau to Australia and in early 1881 he arrived in NSW. His qualifications secured him a position first with Elliott Bros in Sydney, followed by employment with Edward Prosser & Co. He subsequently returned to Elliott Bros, who sent him to Queensland.



Mr John Boileau, Chemist, 1914,
Photographer Unknown
EG-N-071-035

A year’s experience as an employee convinced him to open his own business in Brisbane in 1885, which he successfully operated for two years. The wanderlust took him again and he moved to South Australia in 1888, where he opened businesses in Adelaide in Hindley and Sturt Streets, and also in Port Pirie.

His willingness to extend the boundaries of propriety was on show in Port Pirie, where at the behest of the Port Pirie Lodges, he approached a Dr Smith, indicating that if he came to practice there, *he would help him and all the Lodges would move to him. Further, that of the two doctors there, one was a mere boy and the other was losing custom as he was intemperate in his habits.* He was lucky to get off a libel accusation as the judge ruled that publication was uncertain.

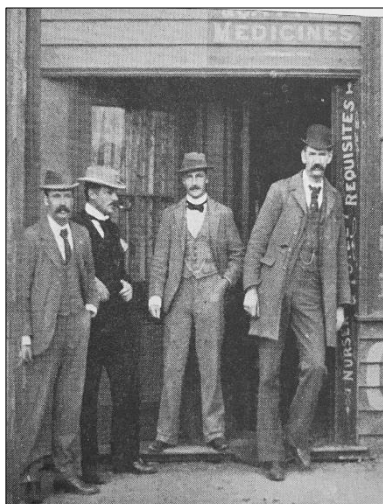
The Eastern Goldfields rushes sparked that adventurous streak again and in 1894 he arrived in Coolgardie.

... People considered Boileau as good as a doctor, and he quickly built a successful business in the Atlas building in Coolgardie, named the Coolgardie Medical Hall, advertising as Pharmacist and Surgeon-dentist, until a fire in 1895 destroyed it.

He saw the value in starting a pharmacy in the thriving town of Hannans, soon renamed Kalgoorlie, even though the Old Camp was still in its heyday. This was in the prime spot of a shop next to the Old Australia Hotel. The Coolgardie Medical Hall was the first shop to be lighted by electricity, and the Hannan Street shop soon followed. He made the usual range of specialties, particularly the popular ‘Cough No More’.

... In a curious change of career he then took over the lease of the Denver City Hotel in Coolgardie and acted as proprietor for some time, leaving the Kalgoorlie pharmacy to be run by a manager.

This palled and he began another business in Coolgardie in 1896, then expanded to the Dirty Acre in Boulder run by H Saxon Lee, also in Broad Arrow and later in Piesse Street.



John Boileau's Pharmacy, *Those Were The Days*, 1933,
John Boileau on the right

... The fact that he was appointed as medical contractor to the Kalgoorlie Government Hospital in 1896 shows the esteem in which he was held in official circles. He was the first pharmacist to be registered by the new Pharmaceutical Council of 1894 and had regular, rather gruffly written communication with the same, mainly in connection with employee or apprentice registration, unregistered men in charge of Pharmacies (though he employed one such himself) and giving the occasional advice on gold mines.

With a remarkable record in sports development, he was probably the foremost promoter on the Goldfields. He started as President of the first cricket club in Coolgardie. As President of the football club he took the first team of Goldfields footballers to the coast in 1896. He founded the first horse racing club in Coolgardie and continued to support all forms of horse racing in Kalgoorlie.

... Music was another interest where he was at the fore, being the original promoter of the Kalgoorlie Brass Band and the Kalgoorlie Eisteddfod ... A keen Irishman, he led the Wolfe Tone centenary parade from Coolgardie Railway Station in 1918. He was also captain of the Kalgoorlie Volunteer Salvage Corps and head of the first Volunteer fire brigade in the Goldfields in Coolgardie. At the Speer's Wine Saloon fire of 1898 he was seen in brass helmet striding around, organising wet rags, buckets and billycans of water, shouting directions and rushing in and out of the flames "like a salamander". As a mason he spent twenty five years with the United Ancient Order of Druids.

As he grew older and matured the rollicking figure of yore settled down to become an exemplary citizen of Kalgoorlie although he retained a shop in Coolgardie until 1915. He was a big spender and his ventures into hotels, notably the Star and Garter and various pharmacies resulted in a bankruptcy hearing on 10th May 1901 by Felton, Grimwade & Bicton, who were pharmaceutical wholesalers. He had continued to trade while insolvent and had paid some creditors preferentially. He attributed his losses to fire, commercial club adverse activity and that the West Australian Bank had prevented him discharging his liabilities. A conditional discharge was made.

Although he never became a member of the Coolgardie Roads Board, he was prominent in the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council. His first attempt at election in 1896 met with failure, but he persevered achieving a tenure on council from 1911 to 1920.

... In 1911 he attempted to enter the West Australian Parliament as a Liberal Independent, stating in various speeches at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie that he was a fair, straightforward fighter who had never broken his word or done a dirty deed, particularly advocating for mining but with a very broad brush in his opinions of what should be. A popular Goldfielder, it wasn't enough to win him the seat.

If rare personal popularity and thoroughly up-to-date catering for public requirements can command success, the new Star and Garter Hotel in Hannan-street west will do very well. This hotel, which is in the hands of Mr. John Boileau, will be opened this afternoon. It is built entirely of brick and stone, and in its construction comfort and convenience and desirable privacy have all been well provided for. There are some 20 rooms in the house. The bars are stocked with a remarkably liberal assortment of best liquors, etc., while as to the general appointments all has been well done. The bedrooms are admirably ventilated and duly furnished. What has been done already, and what more will be done shortly by Mr. Boileau, for the happiness of visitors to the Star and Garter should make the house a highly favorite resort.

... He had sold the Hannan St Pharmacy to Alex Trouchet in 1910 and does not appear to have worked in the pharmacy again, confining his activities to council duties and other public activities.

He resided at 59 Collins Street until his death on 17th March 1922 at Kalgoorlie Government Hospital from kidney problems, a condition he had suffered from for some time, perhaps associated with a severe illness in 1909. The funeral service was conducted by his old friend the Bishop of Kalgoorlie, Edward Collick. The Bishop spoke of him as one of the last of the old timers, big in body, voice and heart. The Kalgoorlie Miner had a later entry: "a big piece of the soul of the place is taken away".

Extracts from a larger paper being written by John Rees about early Goldfield's Pharmacist and entrepreneur John Boileau.

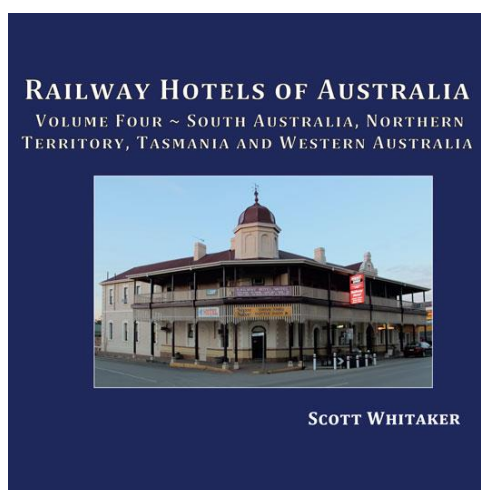
Author Talk, 6.30pm on Tuesday 13th August at William Grundt Memorial Library

Join Scott Whitaker, author of 'Railway Hotels of Australia' book series, at [William Grundt Memorial Library](#), for an informative and entertaining talk about the history of Railway Hotels, including the social, economic and political themes that have shaped society over the last 150 years.

This talk will be of great interest to local historians, rail enthusiasts, researchers, genealogists and those interested in hotels and social history.

About Scott: Scott has authored and self-published four volumes on the Railway Hotels in Australia:

- Volume One: Victoria
- Volume Two: New South Wales
- Volume Three: Queensland
- Volume Four: South Australia, Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia.



Skylab 40th Anniversary Community Program at the Esperance Museum

This year marks the 40th year of Skylab's descent back to Earth and its impact on the Esperance region. To recognise this anniversary, the Esperance Museum is hosting a program of activities in the lead up to the anniversary on 12 July for the community to get involved in.

Skylab was America's first space station and the world's first big space station. It was orbiting unmaned for just over five years before it returned to Earth breaking up and scattering debris across the Esperance region in 1979. Skylab crashing back to Earth is one of our most memorable events for our community that has a significant international connection.



<https://www.esperance.wa.gov.au/skylab-40th-anniversary-community-program>

June to September 2019 EGHS Calendar of Events

Fri 21 June	Visit to Coolgardie RSL, including special guest Tim Cudini talking about WW1 Coolgardie volunteer recruit Robert Leslie Holden	6.30pm in Coolgardie; car pool depart Power House, Boulder at 5.45pm	General Meeting RSVP 9093 3360 or eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org.au
Wed 3 July	Volunteer's Morning Tea - Join with Lucia Pichler for her last day at EGHS for a shared cuppa'	10.30am at the Power House	RSVP 9093 3360
Wed 17 July	General Meeting Guest Speaker TBA	7pm at the Power House	
Sun 21 July	Boulder Markets, FREE Super Pit Bus Tours & FREE Boulder Town Hall Tour	9.00am to 12.00pm EGHS open 10.30am Boulder Town Hall tour	
Sun 4 August	Wongutha Tour with Lyndon Brownley for EGHS members	Details to be confirmed	Contact 9093 3360 for more information
Sun 18 August	Boulder Markets, FREE Super Pit Bus Tours & FREE Boulder Town Hall Tour	9.00am to 12.00pm EGHS open 10.30am Boulder Town Hall tour	
Wed 21 August	AGM, election of new Committee, Guest Speaker Sue Clarke	7pm at the Power House	Annual General Meeting
6-8 September	RWAHS Annual Conference Affiliated Historical Societies	South Perth	Details at https://www.histwest.org.au/node/107
12-16 September	Red Dust Revival Motor Sport	Lake Perkolilli	Details at www.motoringpast.com.au
15 September	Boulder Markets, FREE Super Pit Bus Tours & FREE Boulder Town Hall Tour	9.00am to 12.00pm EGHS open 10.30am Boulder Town Hall tour	
17-18 September	Collections WA Training in conjunction with Heritage Unit, City of Kalgoorlie Boulder and Australian Museums & Galleries Association WA	Venue TBC	Register you interest to participate 9093 3360 eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org.au
18 September	General Meeting Guest Speaker TBA	7pm at the Power House	