



Preserving & promoting Goldfields history

EASTERN GOLDFIELDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

NEWSLETTER March 2018 – No. 18

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Fact or Fiction? *President, W Scott Wilson, reflects on historical accuracy in varying accounts*

The term 'Fake News' has been much publicised in recent times. The aim of fake news or hoax news is to spread false information, usually by social media, under the guise of it being authentic. This is an attempt to mislead people of the true content by the spread of misinformation.

It is generally seen as a deliberate attempt (often outrageously so) by the proponent of an article to have the actual truth drowned out for self-serving purposes. If the media run with the story and accept it at face value, the real story becomes dubious or lost in the face of such conflicting views . . . and the fake news proponents' aims are achieved.

Many think that this is a new phenomenon and only applicable to the modern digital age. But the truth is that misleading information has been with us since the advent of gossip or at least the invention of the printing press!

One time President of the United States of America, Herbert Hoover, for instance, is suggested as the author of the much lauded 'Hoover's Poem' (*Do you ever dream my sweetheart of a twilight long ago, of a park in old Kalgoorlie*) displayed in the Palace Hotel, Kalgoorlie. But it is actually an appropriation of the poem *Carita*, written by a Texan, Hilton R Greer (<https://www.unz.com/print/SmartSet-1905aug-00091/>).

Admittedly, the story of the poem is more folklore than reported as fact, much like the Palace Hotel mirror that Hoover allegedly gave to a barmaid. I will leave that to EGHS member Robyn Horner for the full story in her publication (to be launched in July 2018) on the history of the Palace Hotel.

Sifting through various versions of events can be challenging for researchers. Often newspaper editors were all too eager to report a first-hand account only to have this debunked by another who was also there. And so it goes on . . .

This has been the case while researching the timeline of discovery of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Golden Mile. There are so many conflicting stories, often by the prospectors themselves, each contradicting the other in the press - and often only after the death of that other!

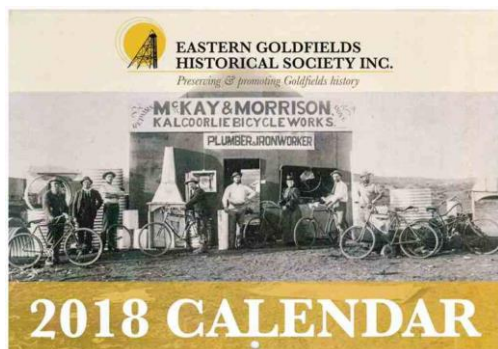
There are accolades and rewards for those who were the first – and rightly so. It's a tradition that has been followed for countless years. But there was a period of time during the discovery of the Westralian Goldfields and shortly afterwards, when vigorous debate was had about stating your connection to a discovery or of being there when it mattered. Whoever was able to put forward the most convincing claim had the best chance of that notoriety.

How often do we as historians and researchers accept and repeat the word that has been recorded many years ago as a truth? Sometimes picking one of the stories that sounds most reasonable and running with it? Blind acceptance of originally poor research leads to the perpetuation of it and, if incorrect, it becomes a historic 'fake news' moment.

It comes down to the depth of research that an individual is prepared to undertake. The use of recorded facts, rather than propagating what others may have (sometimes erroneously) recorded is what is now needed in the recording of our history.

The records and collections held within the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society, and other similar institutions, are there to be utilised for such a purpose. All at EGHS are only too happy to assist anyone in their endeavours. The truth is out there!

Eastern Goldfields Historical Society 2018 Calendars



Have you got your copy of EGHS' commemorative 2018 Calendars?

Available at \$16.50, we have a (very) limited number left. The calendars feature unique historic images from the EGHS image collection.

The response to the calendars has been very positive, especially as they were not available until January 2018. EGHS intends to produce similar calendars, with different Eastern Goldfields themes, each year.

Calendars are available from the Historical Society premises in Boulder, via our website <http://www.kalgoorliehistory.org.au/publications/> or from the Visitor Centre and Museum of the Goldfields, both in Hannan Street, Kalgoorlie.

Our Cornish Miners

Robyn L Horner, Local Historian and EGHS Committee Member discovers her Cornish heritage in the Eastern Goldfields

In the year of the 125th anniversary of the Eastern Goldfields, I thought it was appropriate to recognise my *Cornish Cousins*, who arrived on the Eastern Goldfields following the discoveries of gold in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie in 1893.

"Wherever there's a gold in the ground" runs an old saying, "you'll find a *Cousin Jack* at the bottom of it - searching for metal".

I am from Cornish stock, as is my husband. My Cornish connection comes from both my mother's and father's side. On my mother's side the name of Rogers from Cornwall is very strong, however the strongest connection comes from my father's mother's side, in the name of Curnow – this name actually means *Cornwall* in the old Cornish language. The Curnow's of Cornwall even have their own Tartan designed for them.



James Henry Curnow and family in Kalgoorlie, 1920

Like many other Cornish miners, the family arrived first in Burra, South Australia, in the 1850's to work the copper mines there. My great grandfather James Henry Curnow was born in Burra Creek, South Australia, in 1863. The family then followed work to Broken Hill, and on to Western Australia in the 1890s. Other family members also arrived

in South Australia and worked in the area of Yorke Peninsula known as the Cornish Triangle: Wallaroo, Moonta and Kadina. Moonta became known as "Australia's Little Cornwall".

What interested me most was *where did my ancestors live?* When Cornish miners first found work in Boulder, they retained the Cornish tendency to stick together when away from home and amongst "foreigners". The existence of the Boulder *Cornish Moonta Camp* caught my interest and I wondered where it was? After years of on and off research, I believe it was situated just a few hundred metres directly to the south of the Boulder Block.

A poem written in 1896 by a Cornish miner describes the *Moonta Camp* at Boulder. Judging from the descriptions, it was a decidedly unpleasant and unhealthy locality:

'Tis a number of camps on rising ground,
And a few lateens scattered around
Of the same style of architecture:
They're built of poles and old chaff bags,
Canvass, calico tents, and rags,
All of different hues and texture.

Tins and bones are lying around,
Bags and other filth abound,
And things of a similar stamp;
And fever germs have a depot there,
And a horrid perfume fills the air,
In the Boulder Moonta Camp.

The Moonta Camp looks old and scarred,
The hill they're on looks strange and weird -
It oppresses one with dread;
And the costean pit, where the lateens wave,
Looks like a huge uncanny grave,
Awaiting for the dead.

I cannot place my Cornish relatives directly at the camp, but suspect their conditions were much better: I located my Curnow relatives in 1900, as living at Trafalgar surrounded by the Golden Mile leases, where I am sure many of their Cornish Cousins also made their homes.

Commonly known as *Cousin Jacks* the Cornish made a big difference on the Goldfields. One of my Curnow ancestors by the name of Edward Curnow (my great grandfather's brother) was reported to have designed the first "*lift*" on the Boulder Mines. Other Cornish influences were at the grass roots level, in the behaviour, attitudes and activities of the ordinary *Cousin Jack* miners. At the *Moonta Camp* men would spend their evenings playing euchre, and at Christmas could be heard singing their traditional Cornish carols.



Football teams in Boulder today, were formed from the local footballers known as the *amber and blacks* on account of the Cornish colours they wore. The Boulder City Football Club (established in 1896) still has colours similar to the "amber and blacks".

The first wedding in Coolgardie was between a Cornish couple – Miss Clara Saunders and Mr Arthur Williams, with the officiating clergyman Rev Thomas Trestrail - a Cornish Methodist. At

Boulder there were three Methodist chapels, each with its committed members and many of them *Cousin Jacks*.

The Cornish are a superstitious lot, with the Goldfields Cornish no different - an example of this is the Goldfields' "marriage rhyme":

Married in white you have chosen all right,
Married in grey, you will go far away,
Married in black, you will wish yourself back,
Married in red, you will wish yourself dead,
Married in green, ashamed to be seen,
Married in pearl, you will live in a whirl,
Married in yellow, ashamed of your fellow,
Married in brown, you will live out of town,
Married in pink, your spirit will sink.

Another Cornish connection in the

Goldfields was with the local *Kalgoorlie Miner* newspaper, founded by the Hockings, a Cornish-South Australian family.

The list goes on: Captain William Oates, who was born in St Just-in-Penrith, Cornwall, migrated to Australia in 1884. He eventually found his way to Western Australia and ran the Fraser South Mine at Southern Cross. Captain Oates became the first man in the West Australia to smelt gold. Later he was known as the best mining engineer in the Goldfields.



Captain William Oates

We have a lot to thank our Cornish Miners; they braved the harsh conditions and worked so hard, contributing to what the Goldfields is today.

Library Notes from Jan Lamont, Honorary Librarian

The Eastern Goldfields Historical Society has many library resources available to members. They are organized in the following categories: Australia, Western Australia, Eastern Goldfields, Mining, Biographies, Fiction, Reference and a small collection of CDs and DVDs.

We would like to see more members making use of these useful and interesting resources, for research or for general interest. We do have a number of books that are for reference only, but members and visitors are welcome to read them at the Historical Society during normal opening hours. We look forward to seeing you at the Library.

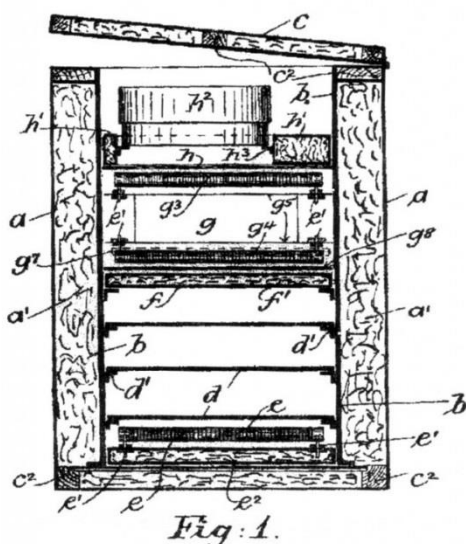
Recent additions to the Library include:

- A family history of Charles Finnerty and Elizabeth Finnerty (nee Mathews), the parents of John Michael Finnerty, who, in 1894, was the first resident magistrate and mining warden in Coolgardie.
- Three Issues of *The Westland*, The Journal of Rail Heritage WA, which contain articles of rail interest to the Goldfields:
 - "Forty Years Since the 'Last Spike'", an article by Bernie Morris, about the official ceremony of the joining up of the Standard Gauge line in 1968.
 - "Lake Lefroy Salt" by Allan Tilley, a brief history of Lefroy Salt Pty Ltd. and the construction of the rail line, featuring the locomotives and rolling stock used by the company.



One of the travelling sisters on the steps of the Commonwealth Railways' Welfare Car – it looks like she has checked and weighed another baby and now hands the child back to the proud mother. photo courtesy the Medical Museum of WA

AUSTRALIA.
29 Nov., 1905. No. 4699/05.
DAVID CURLE SMITH. *Electric Cooking Stove.*



Her recipes in the book incorporate:
"Soups; Boiling; Roasting; Stews, Curries,
Etc; Grilling; Frying; Baked Fish; Eggs;
Sauces; Vegetables; Puddings and
Pastry; Simple Savouries; Cakes, Scones,
Etc."

- "Lake View & Star Gold Mine" by Lindsay Watson tells some of the history of the Lake View & Star, and the tramways, stations, locomotives and trucks used for the transportation of ore from the shafts, to the treatment plants.
- Other articles cover "Turning the sod – 100 years ago"; and "Beyond the Outback", a once a year medical practice on the Tea & Sugar Train by Dr. Des Gurry.

Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy tells the story of David Curle Smith, Kalgoorlie Municipal Council's electrical engineer, who patented an electrical cooking stove in 1905. He undertook the manufacture, distribution and maintenance of the stove, which was one of the first electric cooking stoves, worldwide.

As well as telling the story of lodging the patent and working with the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council regarding manufacture and distribution, the book also contains recipes that his wife, Helen Nora Curle Smith, produced for use with the electric stove.

Helen Nora Curle Smith (nee Murdoch, 1861-1924) was the sister of the renowned essayist and academic, Sir Walter Murdoch (chancellor of the University of Western Australia, and after whom the suburb Murdoch and Murdoch University was named). She was also the aunt of Sir Keith Murdoch (newspaper proprietor and Rupert Murdoch's father).

3. CAMP SOUP :—

There are always a few odds and ends of meat and vegetables in the safe in the morning—perhaps a chop or two, or some steak, stew, or bones of a joint. Cut up the meat, put the fat away, break the bones, put them in a saucepan or jar with any cold vegetables, an onion, and enough water for the amount of soup you want, a dash of cayenne pepper, and some salt. Bring to a boil, simmer for one hour, strain through a wire strainer, pressing the vegetables through with a wooden spoon. Return it to the saucepan to be made thoroughly hot, and serve. If you have any cold peas do not put them in until after the soup has been strained. If desired a teaspoonful of bovril or Liebig's extract of beef can be added, but generally speaking, it is not necessary. Instead of bovril, a few spoonfuls of concentrated milk (not the condensed stuff) or fresh cream may be added. Or less water may be used, and ordinary skimmed milk be substituted. This can be boiled on the right hand grid, and one switch turned off when it boils, or it may be cooked in the oven in a jar or casserole with all the current on to start with, then VIII. and X. turned off. If some pudding or stew is in the oven at the same time, this will often be found an economical way of cooking.

Thermo-Electrical Cooking Made Easy by H Nora Curle Smith, page 42

From the Curator

In recent research, John Rees, Honorary Curator, found the following Letter to the Editor from the Kalgoorlie Miner, Saturday 3 June 1950, mentioning an early activity of the Eastern Goldfields Historical Society regarding John Richard Hollands, who he blazed the trail from Broomehill to Coolgardie in the early 1890s. nla.gov.au/nla.news-article95668245

Sir, - I was very delighted to read of the decision of the Historical Society to erect a headstone on the grave of John Richard Hollands at Coolgardie – the man who led that small party across country from Broome Hill to Coolgardie via Gnarlbine in 1893.

I was a personal friend of dear old Johnnie Hollands from 1919 until his death on November 10, 1936, aged 80 years. Knowing that it was his wish to be buried with his wife in the old Colgardie (sic) cemetery, I arranged with the authorities that he be buried there. The old cemetery had been closed for 28 years. Several years before his own death, he had a stone prepared for his wife's grave (she died in 1894 at an early age and was the first white woman to be buried in Coolgardie).

Hollands was born in Perth at the foot of Mr. Eliza, near Jacob's Ladder, where to-day is Mounts Bay Road. At the age of 12 he shepherded stock where now is the Perth railway station. Later he went to the Great Southern on sandalwood and was at Broome Hill when Coolgardie was found by Bayley and Ford. He left Broome Hill as stated in your official account with two Krakouer brothers and Carmody, all very young men, and headed for Gnarlbine, steering his way with an 18 penny compass. The party was held up at Gnarlbine rocks by the same heavy rains which

had held up Hannan and party at the spot now known as Hannan's Hill, whilst en route to the Youille rush.

Prior to reaching Gnarlbine he was camped at Pigeon Hole (water), and next came on the large rock outcrop which he named Queen Victoria Rocks and on which he placed a trig.

I visited these two places in company with Jim Larcombe in 1920.

On reaching Coolgardie, Hollands received the information about the goldfields made by Hannan, and the party pushed on and pegged some ground near Mt. Charlotte.

Sometime (sic) later the party split up and Hollands was next heard of in the Ora Banda district (Holland's Reward) and elsewhere. He found gold also at Black Hills and often referred to this place.

After many years he returned to Coolgardie and settled down to a quieter life and for a lengthy period we were associated in a number of small, interesting mining ventures.

I have the greatest pleasure in forwarding a donation of £10 10/- towards this very worthy effort, and will also present the society with a good photograph of this fine old pioneer.- Yours etc.,

ERNEST SCAHILL

Coolgardie

The Eastern Goldfields Historical Society has many records and documents in its collections, and the following extract from a report of a paper *EARLY EXPLORERS BLAZING THE TRACKS TO GOLD Holland's Trip Recounted– Broomehill to Coolgardie* presented by Mr R Mills on 28 May 1947 makes interesting reading, especially after reading Mr Scahill's Letter to the Editor.

Early in 1893 four men working at Broomehill decided to make an overland trip to the new gold find at Coolgardie about 400 miles distant in a north-easterly direction. The following story was later told by Mr J Carmody, the only surviving member of the party, who was present at the meeting of the Historical Society:-

"There were four of us in the party, Jack Holland (leader), Rudolph and Dave Thrackourer (brothers) and myself. We left Broomehill on 10th April, 1893, with

two horses in a dray and one saddle horse and provisions for six months, and arrived at Coolgardie about 21st June. We travelled north-east all the way.”

The party had travelled about a third of the distance to Coolgardie when their progress was barred by a big lake. As Carmody attained his 21st birthday on the day the lake was reached it was named in his honour . . .

After finding a way around the south of Lake Carmody, Holland’ s party continued on, named Mt Holland and eventually reached Gnarlbine Soak, and arrived in Coolgardie the day after Hannan had reported his new find at Hannans . . .

“On account of travelling in the winter months and striking a lot of granite rock country” , continued Mr Carmody’ s story, “we were never short of water, but we did experience a shortage of horse feed.”

“We arrived in Coolgardie about 21st June, and left the next day for Hannan’ s new find. My three mates, although they knew very little about mining or mining regulations, began to hunt for the precious metal. I filled in my time carting water from clay pans near Hannans Lake.”

“Most men looked for alluvial gold in those days, and did not bother about reef or mining leases, but my friends pegged a lease on the north side of Mt Charlotte, and in their ignorance pegged only 66 ft by 66 ft. Another more experienced miner pegged a 12 acre lease and included ours in it. This led to a Warden’ s Court case. It was heard by Warden Finnerty. He found in our favour and granted us the 12 acre lease. He heard this case in the open on the disputed ground and used an old log for his bench and seat.”

“I returned to Broomehill about two months later, came back with teams and carried swags and stores to the fields. In December of that year Holland brought his wife to Coolgardie and our party split up. Holland continued to prospect for the rest of his life and was buried at Coolgardie in November, 1936.” (EGHS R2.S15.B41.FE)

Reading such accounts, recounted by someone who was participated in the event, give a life to the sometimes dry telling of histories. These were flesh and blood young men, seeking prosperity and fortune in difficult circumstances.

It also demonstrates the value of keeping and cataloguing records, accounts, documents and ephemera, contributing to our understanding our history and heritage, and helping us to tell our own stories.

Congratulations to Elaine Labuschagne and the Heritage Team in the Shire of Lenora, on being named a finalist in the 2018 Western Australian Heritage Awards, for their work at Gwalia in the Conservation of a State Registered Place category. The winners will be announced on 23 March 2018 at the Burt Memorial Hall, Perth. Good luck to the Leonora Team!

<http://www.gwalia.org.au/>

Upcoming Events

Paved with Gold – Workshop and Information Session

Monday 12 March 2018 4pm to 5.30pm or
Sunday 18 March 2018 11am to 12.30pm

Do you have an interest in the history and heritage of Kalgoorlie-Boulder? Want to be part of creating something new?

The Historical Society is putting a call out to members and community to participate in an exciting project to celebrate 125 years since the discovery of gold in Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Participants in the Paved with Gold project will undertake self-directed (but supported) research, which will be published on-line and in print.

Find out more by attending one (or both) of the workshops on Monday 12 March or Sunday 18 March at the Old Boulder Power Station.

Please ring or email EGHS to register your interest 9093 3360 or eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org.au

63rd Kalgoorlie Boulder Community Fair

Friday 23 and Saturday 24 March 2018

EGHS will have a presence at this year's Community Fair, adjacent to the Bottles and Collectable Club of WA.

Entry to the 2018 Fair is very reasonable at \$10 per family or \$5 for individuals. EGHS looks forward to seeing you there.

City Slickers Walking Tour

Saturday 7 April 2018, 2pm – 4pm

Conducted by Robyn Horner, this walking tour explores some of the residences and suburbs of inner Kalgoorlie. It will cover the early landscape of Kalgoorlie and how it became residential between 1896 and 1916.

The start of the walk is in upper Hannan Street at the former Duke of Cornwall Hotel (Sylvester's opposite the Museum of the Goldfields).

FREE: Robyn's trail booklet will be available to purchase for \$10

Booking essential: please ring or email EGHS 9093 3360 or eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org.au

Pegging of Hannan's Reward Claim

Friday 15 June 2018 at 8.30am

Starting at the obelisk marking Hannan's Reward Claim, this event will look at the pegging of the claim exactly 125 years ago, before it registered in Coolgardie on 17 June 1893.

This is an event organised by EGHS to help celebrate the 125th anniversary of the discovery of gold, details to be confirmed.

Leinster- an Unlikely Oasis

Wednesday 18 July 2018 at 7pm

EGHS Meeting Guest Speakers, Sue and Bernie Siddall

The mining town of Leinster lies like an oasis on the edge of the Gibson Desert, green and verdant amongst the spinifex and mulga covered arid plains of the East Murchison. How did it get there? Who built it and why? Is it really 40 years since its opening?

These and other aspects will be presented in this interesting talk by the editors of a recent book on the first ten years of what was to be the last dedicated company town in WA. The problems of isolation, education and health will be contrasted with those of a FIFO workforce and a few salty anecdotes will lighten proceedings.

So come and enjoy the journey through this part of our history as you learn about the making of an oasis!

History of the Palace Hotel Book Launch

Wednesday 25 July 2018, time TBC

Members and guests are invited to attend the book launch of History of the Palace Hotel by EGHS stalwart Robyn Horner.

Written over a number of years, the book explores the personalities and innumerable stories of the Palace Hotel.

Please ring or email EGHS to register your interest 9093 3360 or eghs@kalgoorliehistory.org.au