

Gwalia Newsletter

Chairperson's Report

Wendy Duncan, MLA, Member for Kalgoorlie, visited Leonora during the Leonora Golden Gift festivities from 31 May to 2 June. During her visit Wendy joined Elaine Labuschagne, Manager Economics & Heritage Services and Kate Ferguson, journalist from The West Australian for a visit to the Gwalia State Hotel. Thank you to St Barbara Ltd. for the special permission to view the State Hotel as it is usually closed to the public.



Wendy and Ian Duncan at the Gwalia State Hotel, the last State Hotel still remaining in WA

Kate Ferguson wrote an excellent article based on her visit to Gwalia. It was published in The West Australian on 14 June 2014 and she also produced a video clip on Gwalia. The link to the video:

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/video/watch/24235777/the-ghosts-of-gwalia/>

Gemma Smith from Hocking Heritage Studio visited Gwalia 5 to 7 May 2014 to prepare five more Heritage Impact Statements, bringing the total to 17 Impact Statements for Shire-owned buildings in Gwalia.

The conservation work on the Leonora tram started on 9 June. We will give an update in the next newsletter.

The Shire of Leonora also hosted 60 German travel agents on 4 May. They had a tour of Gwalia ghost town before going up to Hoover House for a meal on the verandah overlooking the beautiful garden and the open pit.

The first public talk was held on 12 June with Jean Lyneham as guest speaker. The aim is to hold public talks every two months. The next speaker is Anne Skinner on Tuesday 12 August and the topic is Goldfields To Battlefields - Stories behind the Sons of Gwalia Honour Roll 1914-1918.

Tralee Cable helped Convict Bags with their photo-shoot at Gwalia 26-27 April. Tralee's hard work and the time she dedicated paid off and Convict Bags were very happy with the end result and it helps to promote Gwalia ghost town & museum. Read more about this in the next newsletter.

Matt Taylor

**Chairperson:
Gwalia Reference Group**

Inside this issue:

- 1 [Chairperson's Report](#)
- 2 [The Road Doesn't Go There Any More](#)
- 3 ♦ [A Piece of Gwalia History](#)
♦ [Leonora Pharmacy Shield](#)
- 4 [The Wesleyans in Gwalia](#)
- 5 [A Police Officer's Memories](#)
- 6 [World War I feature-- Gwalia miner among hundreds killed in battle of Bloody Angle](#)
- 7 [Recapturing the spirit of Leinster](#)
- 8 ♦ [The New Shed Update](#)
♦ [Pergola & Hitching Rail Completed](#)
- 9 ♦ [Thank You](#)
♦ [Friends of Gwalia](#)
♦ [Newsletter contributions](#)
- 10 [Friends of Gwalia Subscription Form](#)



Kate Ferguson from The West Australian at work recording interviews.

The Road Doesn't Go There Any More

Jean Lyneham

Have you ever whizzed along the blacktop from Leonora to Wiluna in your four-wheel-drive, radio on, air-conditioner and lounge-type seats making the ride comfortable? Didn't take long, did it?



Matt Taylor, GRG Chairperson, welcoming Jean Lyneham and guests

Did you spare a thought for those who went on the now-hidden road, those who jolted along by Cobb and Co coach, hot in summer, freezing in winter, covered in dust or mud? The coming of the motor car did not improve the dust, mud, heat and cold, but did speed up the journey. Whether the travellers went by coach or car, they still stopped at all the hotels along the way.

Jean lived in such a corrugated-iron pub at Kathleen Valley when she was a child. Other pubs at Doyle's Well, Lawlers, Agnew and Mount Sir Samuel were still there, gradually fading until only Agnew and Kathleen Valley were left. Now there is only the Agnew pub.

The road has been realigned, so that only those taking the old dirt road can find these places now, and their very existence is forgotten. The Lawlers-Wiluna journey took almost three days, with two overnight stops. Once the railway reached Leonora (1903), the coach route from Leonora to Lawlers was established.

Jean Lyneham (nee Moriarty) presented a public talk about the Old Coach Road to Wiluna on 12 June at Hoover House. Jean would like to thank the Shire of Leonora for providing food and refreshments and Gail and Gary Ross for preparing the food and setting up the venue; and Elaine Labuschagne for initiating and arranging the talk. The event was a great success.



Matt Taylor, Jean Lyneham, Tralee Cable, Denise and Michael Lorentz



Locals and visitors enjoyed the talk and opportunity to spend time in the beautiful Hoover House

Public Talk

**Goldfields To Battlefields
Stories behind the Sons of Gwalia Honour Roll 1914-1918**

**Guest Speaker: Anne Skinner
Venue: Hoover House
Date: 12 August 2014
Time: 6pm-8pm**

A piece of Gwalia History

Stephen Fanetti

My father Domenic Fanetti left Italy in 1939 and come to Leonora to join his father Stepheno Fanetti, who was well known in the community.

Domenic commenced work on the Sons of Gwalia Mine. He met his wife Florrie and they had 6 children. He purchased their house in Tower Street Gwalia, where they lived until they moved to Kalgoorlie 1957, due to the uncertainty of the Sons of Gwalia productivity.



The Fanetti family presented the framed photographs to Gail Ross, Gwalia Museum Manager

The Shire of Leonora would like to acknowledge
Stephen Fanetti and Family
for the donation to Gwalia ghost town & museum.
Thank you for sharing your family history.

One of the highlights of Dad's time in Gwalia was when he assisted Jim Pike in the relocation of L.R. Compton's grocery store on an ex-army jinker and vehicle. The shop had been purchased by Victor Mazza.

The building was transported in three sections from Station Street next to the State Hotel to Lot 518 & 519 Tower Street where it stands today.



The L.R. Crompton shop before it was relocated to Tower Street

Donation of "Leonora Pharmacy Shield"



Gail Ross receiving Barry's donation of the shield on behalf of Gwalia Museum

The "Leonora Pharmacy Shield" was presented to the "Leonora Rifle Club" for the Annual Competition. Barry Robertson, donated the shield to the Gwalia Museum in May this year.

During his visit Barry also shared information about his uncle Lce. Cpl. Neil Robertson and gave us photographs we can use in our World War 1 exhibition. Read in the next newsletter about Neil Robertson.

The Shire of Leonora would like to thank
Barry Robertson
for the donation to Gwalia ghost town & museum.

The Wesleyans In Gwalia

Arlene Collings

It was a long way over a rough track as the young schoolgirl went searching. She was looking for the heel of her mother's shoe, wrenched off on the way home from church. Ladies were beautifully dressed, despite the heat and dust and isolation, fashion was important.



The Wesleyan Church in Gwalia

Artist: Arlene Collings

The little white corrugated iron building had been jinkered from Malcolm by a donkey team in 1899. It was 24 feet by 24 feet and a ceiling height of 14 feet and set on mulga stumps and with a pug and canvas floor. Next door a manse was built. Initially the Church was also used as the first Government school with Mr. Hewson as the teacher.

Many children attended the Sunday school. In 1917 in the space of 6 hours volunteers built on the back of the main building a Sunday school room (also used as the Scout hall).

This little church was important part of the community and a popular meeting place. Many families including the tough mining men attending, concerts were held and musical instruments played.

Gladys became the church organist and played on the old pedal organ each Sunday and for weddings and other occasions. By 1928 a new organ was needed and a bazaar was held in the local A.W.U. hall to raise the money needed. There was a series of Methodist ministers sent to this remote congregation.

Gladys told many stories of life at the church, how one minister would go to the Beatty house for a roast chicken dinner after the service and insisted on eating the tail or "parson's nose" of the chicken. Another had a severe breakdown as he depended on the poor offerings of the equally poor miners and the money was short. One of the ministers was in a wheelchair but he wrote the most beautiful poetry.



Arlene and Roland Collings on the site of the Church during a recent visit

It was 1916 and the Beatty family had moved to Tower Hill to the Underground Manager's house (Sons of Gwalia Gold mine) and Gladys Beatty, 11 years old, was attending the local school in Johnston Street. Having found the heel, her father used an iron shoe-last to mend it. This experience was often repeated.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church was near the eastern edge of Mount Leonora, way beyond the back of Hoover House's chook pens and on mining lease 491c.



Bessie Beatty and her daughter Gladys

Today no trace remains of the iron church, just some small broken fragments of old teacups, a slab of cement, probably the front step, and the haunting winds blowing across the place where once homes and life and laughter and worship all took place.

A Police Officer's Memories

Tony Mott

My wife Gwen and I recently did a nostalgic tour of the goldfields including the visit of Police stations where I performed duties as an officer in charge. I was appointed Officer In Charge of Leonora in 1955 and arrived in October with my wife and a 6-month-old son Garry who later became a police officer, resigning after 20 years' service with the rank of Detective Sergeant.

In those days Gwalia had a one man Police Station and Leonora was the senior one man Police Station and responsible for the whole Leonora Shire area.



Tony Mott with his wife Gwen during a stay at Hoover House on 9 and 10 May

During my 3 years at Leonora there were several fatalities underground on the Sons of Gwalia mine requiring me to assist the local Gwalia police officer. This usually required my attending the scene underground. The Sons of Gwalia gold mine was not like any other mine throughout the world with a normal vertical lift to go up and down the wire. It had an incline system to bring up the ore and to transport workers up and down.

To do this a ladder was placed inside the skip and we would climb in one after the other with a helmet on (of course) supplied by the management and the shift boss calling out "KEEP YOUR BLOODY HEAD DOWN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO LOSE IT". Two deaths I remember was one

young fellow being jammed between a loader and the wall; he was crushed to death. Another was freeing ore from a stope and climbed up without a safety rope attached. The ore suddenly gave way, he went with it and was suffocated.

Reg Barden was mine manager in those days and was a great friend of Jack Bell from Clover Downs Station who always looked forward to the visit of the Resident Magistrate and Mining Warden, Burnie O'Sullivan (who later became the chairman of the WA Football Tribunal).

Maurice McCallum (wife Ruth) was the Doctor who had the smallest swimming pool I have ever seen at the rear of his house by the old hospital, but it was welcome relief from the harsh summer heat.

Sadie Corner, later Canning, was Matron of the hospital and Alan Hutcheson (wife Pat) was the Chemist. I often went shooting kangaroos at night with a spotlight with the Doctor and Chemist as in those days the Leonora Shire paid us a bounty of 1/6 (15 cents) per pair of ears also for foxes and emu beaks.



Tony Mott was Officer in Charge at Leonora Police Station from 1955-58

Malcolm Dam was a popular BBQ and night swimming spot for the Doctor, Chemist, police officer, young kids and Don Murray and his wife from Mertondale Station. There was an arrangement to take a transistor radio with us in case anyone would broadcast a message to us over the radio (I think 6KG). There were no police radios in country stations except up north and in Leonora the telephone exchange was manned 24 hours a day, you could only contact Menzies, Laverton, Wiluna and Sandstone during the day.

Gwalia miner among hundreds killed in battle of Bloody Angle

Anne Skinner

It was the night of 2 May 1915 and the sound of exploding artillery shells above the ridges and gullies of Gallipoli was so deafening no-one could hear the crack of rifle fire between the Australian and Turkish positions.

The 16th Battalion was ordered to attack Bloody Angle, a steep climb up a craggy slope near Quinn's Post high above the landing site at Anzac Cove, where the attack was supported by the big guns of the Allied ships backed by shore-based artillery. The soldiers of the 16th were dangerously exposed and there were many casualties as they hastily dug trenches in the dark, their ammunition running low as they battled to fend off enemy fire.



Bloody Angle is in the bottom of the gully where the bushes can be seen, with Pope's Hill on the left and Deadman's Ridge on the right. Photo G01764 Courtesy of Australian War Memorial

Was Sons of Gwalia miner Samuel Smith one of the volunteers who were mown down, falling dead across the ammunition boxes they were carrying up to the trenches? Was he in the line, firing over the parapet when the fatal bullet found him? Or was he part of the suicidal charge early the next morning when the men of the 16th were slaughtered in their hundreds by the well-entrenched Turks?

No witnesses ever came forward to report Pte Smith's last known movements during the hours between dusk on 2 May and dawn on 3 May. All anyone knows is that the 37-year-old soldier was one of the 330 men and eight officers who were killed, wounded or listed as missing that night.

When the battalion was withdrawn after the failed attack, it was deemed too dangerous to retrieve the bodies strewn on the treacherous slope and they lay there until after the war.

In January 1919 tattered pieces of uniform, some bearing the insignia and faded white-over-blue colour patches of the 16th Battalion, were found lying among the scattered bones. Most of the remains could not be identified and Pte Smith is among other casualties of Bloody Angle commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial.

The Victorian-born Pte Smith enlisted at Helena Vale on 20 September 1914 and was part of the original 16th Battalion, which was raised about six weeks after the outbreak of World War I. Three quarters of the battalion was recruited in Western Australia and the remainder in South Australia. The battalion trained in Victoria and embarked from Melbourne on A40 HMT Ceramic on 22 December 1914.



525 Pte Samuel Smith is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli

When 525 Pte Smith landed at Gallipoli late on the afternoon of 25 April 1915, the 16th Battalion was 1000 strong. At roll call after that night of slaughter on 2 May and the bloody dawn dash of 3 May, only nine officers and 290 men answered their names. After his death was reported to his grieving family, Pte Smith's sister Mary Jane Mighell wrote to the Australian Army's Base Records section: "... two brothers are gone to the front, one killed and the other still going strong so far, and I suppose the next I will hear that he is gone. They were two of the best and went with a good heart and could not get to the front quick enough".

Recapturing the spirit of Leinster

Sue Siddall

Former Leinster residents have come together to pen the history of Leinster, arguably the last of the dedicated mining towns in Western Australia. It was built to support the mining of a large nickel deposit, known as the Perseverance ore body of the Agnew Nickel Project. Leinster is located in the East Murchison Goldfields, approximately 130km North/North West of Leonora and falls within the Shire of Leonora.

It is a relatively recent history, with construction commencing in 1977 in a remote location selected for its topography and vegetative cover, rather than for previous occupation in gold rushes to the area at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Over the next ten years, the town came alive and thrived. The construction camps transitioned into functioning quarters for employees and contractors. The town was carefully planted amongst seasoned eucalypts and pleasant dunes. Agnew Mining Company began to employ many single and married women in previously male-only jobs, which was revolutionary in the 1970s. Job turnover was low as both men and women strived to fulfil the promise of this brave new world.

Children roamed free across the townsite and after-work activities blossomed. Social, cultural, religious and sporting organisations built facilities and followings, regularly engaging with their adherents. Milestones were set and achieved as the town took on a character of its own. In time, change crept in and the initial vision morphed into something more conventional.

By 1982, times were tough and a new management sought to squeeze the costs whilst retaining the benefits of such a beautiful place. All the while, the shaft sinking exercise progressed towards the deep ore body that promised years of economic operation.

The book will conclude in 1986, when the mine was placed on care and maintenance in response to the low price of nickel and many of the residents were obliged to leave. Later, the town changed into a base for Fly-In Fly-Out operations with a relatively small number of permanent inhabitants and a different owner with a different philosophy.



The first "Former Leinster Residents Association" Reunion on 25 May 2014, with Bernie Siddall explaining the book content and progress.



Jim Epis, CEO Shire of Leonora with Sue and Bernie Siddall during a recent visit. The Siddalls were in Leonora and Leinster to conduct research for the Leinster book

With the change, it was inevitable that much of the detail was lost. This, in turn, prompted a small group of former residents and adjacent pastoralists to unite their recollections, photos and memorabilia to recapture the spirit of Leinster.

Sue Siddall who edited the first AMC newsletters and husband, Bernie, the first manager of metallurgy, is collecting stories and anecdotes to produce a history book. If you have lived and worked in Leinster between 1976 and 1986 you can email a story or a one-liner to Sue at sws@iinet.net.au or if you would prefer, your story could be recorded by interview and transcribed, ring her on 0419 241 941.

The New Shed Update

Work on the new shed is progressing well. The hearse, mail truck and the Leonora tram will be on display in the new shed. The Museum Office and Shop will also relocate to the shed. A grant for this project was received from the Department Regional Development and Lands: Country Local Government Fund (CLGF).



Pouring the concrete slab for the flooring of the shed



The size of the shed is evident

Pergola and Hitching Rail Completed



The Shire aims to maintain buildings and structures in its care to help visitors to enjoy their experience at the Museum & Hoover House.

Both the pergola and hitching rail had severe termite damage and timber were rotten. The pergola has been repaired and repainted. The old hitching rail was replaced as it became unsafe.

Work on the pergola at the entrance of Hoover House Garden was completed in early May



The new hitching rail on the eastern side of the Mine Office

Thank you

- ♦ Jean Lyneham very kindly supplied the materials and made three book pillows for the Gwalia Archive.
- ♦ Peter Lyneham for volunteering his time to help with dressing the saddles.
- ♦ The Shire of Leonora funded the refreshments at the public talk.
- ♦ Wendy Duncan, MLA, for her visit and interest in Gwalia.
- ♦ St Barbara Ltd. allowed special access to the Gwalia State Hotel.
- ♦ Kate Ferguson, from The West Australian, for the excellent article and video on Gwalia.



Peter Lyneham working on some of the saddles in the collection

Friends of Gwalia Renewals

Remember that the renewals for the Friends of Gwalia are now due. Renewals will be open from 1 May and close on 30 June each year. Any renewal or new membership that has already been received in January and February are now not required until May 2015. Funds generated through the Friends of Gwalia will remain separate from other Shire funds and will be used for specific targets set by the Gwalia Reference Group each year.

Newsletter contributions

If you have memories to share, are looking for a past friend or seeking information on something relating to Gwalia or Leonora, we would be pleased to include it in our newsletter. Please forward them to **Elaine Labuschagne, Manager Heritage & Economic Services**, along with any suitable photographs. *We reserve the right to edit or to decline to publish depending on the content.*

If you have family, friends or colleagues that would like to be included on our Newsletter mailing list, please contact our Museum Manager Gail Ross.

Gwalia Museum + Hoover House B&B Shire of Leonora

Address: Tower Street, Gwalia
Postal: PO Box 56, Leonora, WA, 6438
Phone: 08 9037 7122
Mobile: 0419 958 199
Email: museum@gwalia.org.au



Contacts

Chair, Gwalia Reference Group	Matt Taylor	matt@pmcc.com.au	0417 976 169
Manager, Gwalia Museum	Gail Ross	museum@gwalia.org.au	08 9037 7122
Manager, Heritage & Economics	Elaine Labuschagne	mehs@leonora.wa.gov.au	08 9037 6044



GWALIA MUSEUM + HOOVER HOUSE B&B

PO Box 56
Leonora
WA 6438

Friends of Gwalia Museum

Subscription Form

museum@gwalia.org.au

By becoming a Friend of Gwalia Museum you will play an important role the preservation of buildings, machinery, objects, photographs and documents associated with Gwalia, the Sons of Gwalia Mine and the Leonora district.

You will also help Gwalia Museum share fascinating stories associated with these significant items through your support of public programmes and events.

Our mission

Gwalia Museum's mission is to conserve, explore and share the cultural heritage of Gwalia and Leonora. With your support, we can achieve our mission.

Gwalia Museum Collections

Gwalia Museum contains significant collections of buildings and machinery from Gwalia townsite and the Sons of Gwalia Mine, as well as objects, documents and photographs to these and the wider Leonora region covering mining, pastoralism, commercial enterprises and community facilities. With your support, we can continue to collect, conserve and enhance our collections for today's and future generations.

Learning and public events

Through our buildings, exhibitions and displays, public programmes and events, we aim to share the history and heritage of Gwalia and Leonora. With your support, we can continue this work.

As a subscriber, you will receive a quarterly newsletter, updates of important events and the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting Gwalia Museum.

Funds generated through the Friends of Gwalia will remain separate from other Shire funds and will be used for specific targets set by the Gwalia Reference Group each year.
The target for 2014/15 is the conservation of the Gwalia cottages.

I wish to subscribe to the Friends of Gwalia Museum

Annual Subscription \$20.00 (inc GST)
Other donation \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

Title _____

Name _____

Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____ **Postcode** _____

Home Phone _____

Mobile phone _____

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I have enclosed a cheque/money order for this amount payable to the Shire of Leonora <input type="checkbox"/>	
OR I wish to pay by credit/debit card	
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	<input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard
Card Number _____	
Name on card _____	
Signature _____	
Expiry date _____	Today's date _____
Do you require a receipt? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	

How may you be able to assist Gwalia Museum? (please circle)

Volunteer museum work / Volunteer for activities and events / Other _____

What is your association with Gwalia/Leonora? (Where you lived and/or worked, with dates etc.)
