

Gwalia Newsletter

Gwalia Update

The new year is already in its second month and as always there is a number of projects planned for Gwalia and Leonora.

Conservation work will shortly commence on Burglar Bill's and then the Shift Boss's House. Thereafter work to the Function House, Unnamed camp and Major's Boarding House will start.

The ceiling in the dining room of Hoover House was replaced after serious crack threatened the collapse of the ceiling. The ceiling roses dating back to the 1930s were refixed to the new ceiling. The vanities in the bathrooms were sanded and resealed.

Funding was received from Lotterywest for an online digital map illustrating the heritage buildings of Leonora. The map will be accessible from your Smartphone and tablet. We also received a grant from the National Library of Australia for a compactus for the archive at the Gwalia Museum.

A very successful Victorian Tea was hosted on 21 September 2014 at Hoover House with 40 ladies from the region attending.

The vintage vehicle shed is now completed and the museum office and shop have shifted to the new building at the entrance gate.

The structural work and paintwork to the Leonora tram is finished and it was relocated to the vehicle shed where visitors can appreciate it.

The State Heritage Council paid a visit to Leonora on 20 October 2014 to see first hand what we are busy with. The crew from the "Our Town" television series was filming in Leonora and Gwalia 26 - 30 October 2014.

With Elaine Labuschagne's return after an absence of 5 months, we are now back on track with producing the newsletter.

We trust that you will continue to enjoy receiving the Gwalia newsletter.



Work on Burglar Bill's will start shortly.

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New Vintage Vehicle Shed

Elaine Labuschagne

The new shed at the entrance gate of Gwalia Museum is now completed. The construction of the shed started in May 2014. The main purpose of the shed is to house the vintage vehicles, namely the hearse, mail truck and the Leonora tram. These vehicles will now be protected from the harsh goldfields environment.

Interpretive panels still need to be completed and will educate the visitors further about the vintage vehicles.

The Museum Office and Shop has relocated to the shed. This will be the visitors' first port of call when entering the museum precinct on the hill in Gwalia.

The shed is constructed from econodek (freezer panelling) which ensures that the building is well insulated. It is envisaged that landscaping will soften the west wall of the shed and that a mural depicting the history of Gwalia will enable the building to blend in with the environment.



The western wall of the new vintage vehicle shed.

The Shire of Leonora received a grant for this project from the Department of Regional Development and Lands: Country Local Government Fund (CLGF).

Leonora Featured in Our Town Series

The Shire of Leonora invested funds in the production of the Leonora segment of the Our Town Series. The episode featuring Leonora was broadcast on 20 December 2014 at 5pm on Channel 7 & GWN7. You can view it at - <https://vimeo.com/114874392>

The crew was in town filming from 26 October to 30 October 2014 talking to locals and capturing some of the tourist attraction that Leonora has to offer visitors.



The crew busy filming at the Gwalia Museum.

Heritage Council Visits Goldfields

State Heritage Office

The Heritage Council visited the Goldfields in October last year as part of its outreach and engagement program.

Heritage Councillor Philip Griffiths, Executive Director Graeme Gammie and Manager Local Government Services Callum Crofton from the State Heritage Office visited Leonora and Gwalia to establish and grow relationships with agencies and groups around the State.

“Having face-to-face conversations with local governments, owners and community members is the best way to explain the role of the Heritage Council and State Heritage Office. It also allows us to gain a better understanding of heritage activity and issues in the regions,” Mr Gammie said.



Graeme Gammie, Executive Director , State Heritage Office, Larnie Petersen Councillor Shire of Leonora, Michael & Denise Lorentz, owners of the Station Master's House in Leonora. Photo taken by Heritage Council.

“It's always good to see the results of local heritage efforts and recognise the work of the Shire and individual owners in caring for their heritage places.

“The Goldfields is part of our State's early history and we acknowledge the efforts of local governments in maintaining sites like Gwalia on behalf of the local community and the State.

“This visit yielded useful discussions with several private owners, including a visit to the former Station Master's House to see the progress of Michael and Denise's conservation work,” Mr Gammie said.

The visit was valuable and provided an opportunity for the Heritage Council to meet with five local governments from the region and other Goldfields agencies.

“The Heritage Council appreciates the support and assistance of the Shire of Leonora in coordinating activities and making our visit such a success,” Mr Gammie said.

Victorian Tea Held at Hoover House

Elaine Labuschagne

On 21 September 2014 beautiful abundantly decorated tables with pink roses, lilac coloured stocks and white baby's breath and fine floral china were set on the verandah of historical Hoover House overlooking the tranquil garden with its lush green lawns.

In November 2013 Judy Inveen donated handwritten recipes of her grandmother Blanche Hunter (nee Penny) to the Gwalia Museum. Blanche was the cook at the Gwalia State Hotel from c1907 to 1914 while her husband managed the hotel.

Elaine Labuschagne, Manager Economics & Heritage Services, organised a Victorian Afternoon Tea to acknowledge Blanche and her hundred-year-old recipes. Greg Sbizzirri, chef at the White House Hotel in Leonora, and Maree Galton, were responsible for recreating Blanche's Victorian Sponge, lamingtons and delicious



Robyn Horner, Anne Skinner, Wendy Duncan, Vivian Greenmont, Daphne Crawford.

coffee and orange cake recipes for the Tea.

The Victorian Afternoon Tea was well supported with forty ladies from Leonora as well as ladies from Menzies and Kalgoorlie-Boulder attending. The guest speaker on the day was Wendy Duncan, MLA, who spoke about growing up on a local station and her journey into politics.

Curtin volunteers Santana, Josh, Cameron, Katie and Hayley did a stellar job helping, together with Denise Lorentz from the Gwalia Leonora Reference Group and Anne Skinner to decorate the tables and serve guest ample cups of tea. Margot Epis, Tralee Cable, Robyn Horner and Zoe Scott kindly offered their heirloom teaset and cake platters to



Joan Johnson a Leonora resident for almost 80 years enjoyed a cuppa.

contribute to the experience.

Ladies said that the beautifully decorated tables, attention to detail and excellent food they shared with friends and family made them feel special. Many asked when the next event will be held.



Maree Galton showcasing one of the cakes she made for the tea and Elaine Labuschagne.

The Shire of Leonora is busy compiling a recipe book with Blanche's recipes with consent from Blanch Hunter's family. We hope that this should be available later in the year.



Julie Coufos, Angela Clinton and Wendy Duncan.

Miner Killed When Enemy Overran Machine Gun Post

Anne Skinner



Private Thomas Edwin Guilmartin was just 22 when he was killed in action in Northern France. His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

In the maelstrom of battle on 15 April 1917, Gwalia miner Thomas Edwin Guilmartin and another 11th Battalion soldier were sent up to the front line with a supply of grenades, or “bombs”, to help their A Company comrades hold a machine gun post.

It was one of many Australian positions near the village of Lagnicourt in Northern France under attack by a vastly superior German force. The machine gun crew fought to their last bullet and last grenade before being overrun by the enemy.

The survivors were taken prisoner and one of them, Sergeant William Robinson, later described the scene at the destroyed machine gun post: “They would not allow us to go into the post to see if any of our men were alive. We could see them lying about, but could not say if they were wounded or dead. It is believed they were all killed.”

the Battle of Lagnicourt. Despite their heavy losses, the Australians were able to recapture the village and drive the Germans back to the Hindenberg Line.

Pte Guilmartin had migrated from England to work in Western Australia’s Northern Goldfields before war broke out. The 21-year-old miner enlisted at Blackboy Hill on February 10, 1916, sailing for France with the 11th Battalion aboard HMAT Aeneas on April 17, 1916. On Easter Monday while aboard ship, he was in the 11th Battalion team battling it out in a rifle exercise against 28th Battalion reinforcements.

After training in England and on the eve of sailing for the trenches of France, Pte Guilmartin granted himself a little unauthorised leave in Folkestone, for which he was docked a day’s pay.

He served in France and Belgium for the remainder of 1916 before being reported missing in action near Lagnicourt, almost exactly a year after he sailed from Fremantle.

Pte Guilmartin has no known grave and is commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.



Two unidentified soldiers stand amid the shattered buildings in the French village of Lagnicourt, which was captured by the Australians in late March 1917 as the Germans withdrew towards the Hindenburg Line.

Sacred Roman Catholic Heart Church

Robyn Horner

The Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church is located in Gwalia Street, Leonora. The building contractor Charles William Smallhorn constructed the 22ft. X 58.5ft wood and



The Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Gwalia Street, Leonora.



Sister Annette in front of the altar in the church.

iron Church building. Rev. Father E. O'Malley blessed the new church when it opened its doors on Sunday 28 August 1901 at 11 o'clock. That evening the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given and a choir sang, accompanied by violin and harp.

In 1903 a Convent School was built and ran by the Dominican Sisters for locals and borders from outlying areas. These students would attend Mass at the Sacred Heart Church located just behind the boarding facility in Hoover Street.



Rev. Father O'Malley was the first Priest at the Leonora parish.

The bell Founder was Mathew O. Byrne, James Street Dublin, Ireland. Rev. Dr. Graber received the Church Bells (one each for Leonora, Gwalia and Malcom) in January 1906 and they were hung on St Patrick's Day in 1906.

In early 1909 the Church underwent a complete renovation carried out by George Wilson. The internal wall linings and ceilings were replaced by stamped metal in ecclesiastical patterns. The roof was fitted with three Boyle ventilators.

Ongoing maintenance to the Church over the years ensured that it is still used today by the people of Leonora. Sister Annette has served Leonora for the past 12 years and also travels to Laverton and Leinster.



A set of "Stations of the Cross," replicated from the paintings of Morgoni was ordered and hung in the Church.

Leonora Electric Tram

Elaine Labuschagne

In 1902 a steam powered tram system operated and provided transport to the mine workers living in Leonora and working on the Sons of Gwalia Mine and for Gwalia residents to shop in Leonora.

The steam powered tramway was upgraded to an electrical service and the Leonora Electrical tram service opened on 10 October 1908. The two mile (3.2km) trip between Leonora and Gwalia would last 10 minutes. The Leonora Electric Tram was made by Brill Company in Philadelphia, USA.

A fire that destroyed the Leonora Power House, the tram was replaced by a petrol tramcar that ran on the rails In 1916. The tram service stopped in 1921.

After removal from service in 1916, the Electric Tram was stored at the old Power Station Site and later sold to the Leaney family who donated it to the museum in the 1990s.

The Shire of Leonora funded recent restoration work to the Leonora Electric Tram. The tram is not complete as the mechanical and under gear was removed many years ago. The purpose of the work to the tram was to retain as much of the original materials, replace like-with-like material where required and do basic maintenance work.

Stephen Peacock from PMMC completed work in September 2014, following the conservation plan prepared Phillipa Rogers.



Before work started on the Tram in June 2014.



After work was completed and before the painting was done.



Stephen Peacock in the process of redoing the floorboards on the platform.



The floorboards replaced on the platform and awaiting new metal front cover.

Leonora Tram

The steps and the floor boards on the platform where the engine driver would have sat were replaced as well as the metal structure in front. Some window frames were remade and all the windows reglazed. The ceiling of the platform roof on either end were repaired.



After conservation work was completed the tram was moved to the vintage vehicle shed.

shed.

The doors required major work to open and close again. With the help from the Perth Electrical Tram Society the correct door mechanism could be installed. We are still trying to source the historically correct door handles. The current door handles are an interim measure only. Some features were handcrafted to ensure authenticity.

After work was completed, Matt Taylor from Pipeline Mining and Civil Contracting (PMCC) and Boyd Sprigg from Earth Australia moved the tram to its new location in the vintage vehicle

Terry Demasson then painted the tram in November 2014. The exterior colour is Indian Red with cream trims.

Visitors can now view the tram, however, interpretation of the tram still needs to be completed. You can read more about the Leonora Tram in the August 2014 newsletter of the Perth Electrical Trams Society.



Terry Demasson from Leonora Painters and long time resident of Leonora painted the tram late last year.

Christmas at Kathleen Valley

Jean Lyneham (nee Moriarty)

A hundred and ten miles north of Leonora, Kathleen Valley's gold boom had long passed by the time I lived there in the 1940s. Remaining were the hermit prospectors unable to live in towns and the flotsam of my family, who owned the corrugated iron Yellow Aster hotel, a small station and some unproductive mines. Hardly the kind of place where Christmas might be expected to be meaningful.

Nevertheless, we all looked forward to Christmas, planning for months beforehand. There were no shops, so all ingredients, summer clothes and fabrics, Christmas cards and presents had to be ordered long in advance from the catalogues and delivered by the mail-truck. A leg of younger mutton smoked in a metal tank as "ham" (rubbing the leg with brown sugar, spices and salt), chooks fattened, eggs preserved with Keep-Egg saved up in the cellar and guests invited rounded out the initial preparations.

A week before Christmas, Mum made biscuits and decorated the cake, with help from me, although I ate more icing than I applied to the cake, all while battling heat and dust storms. Two days prior to Christmas, Dad took us out to find a Christmas tree. We kept a little pine-type tree in sand and water, decorating it with home-made paper stars and chains. As there was no holly or ivy to decorate the house with greenery, we cut branches from a flourishing kurrajong and tied these to wire mesh around the house.

On Christmas Eve, Dad beheaded two chooks, Mum plunged them into a copper full of boiling water, and proceeded to dress them before hanging them in the meat-safe away from early flies. Jellies and ice-cream were setting in the fridge, custard made, the table set and vegetables put out for early preparation. I was bursting with excitement by this time! First thing on Christmas morning, I went looking for my presents. By the lavish standards of today, they were insignificant, but to me magnificent. One wartime year there was a celluloid doll with a mended nose and a cloth body. It was impossible to buy dolls, but an aunt had found the limbs and head, Mum made the body and the clothes and I was ecstatic.

Guests arrived before eleven to enjoy the free Christmas lunch. The Howard family from Albion Downs came one year, the hermit prospectors always turned up and other guests were invited occasionally. Always Grandad set an extra place at the table for any lonely person who happened by.



Kathleen Valley Christmas 1917

*Back: George Giles, Margareta (Annie) Currie,
....., Mr H. Howard, George Cole, George Burnett.
Middle: Doris Howard, Mrs Howard,, Mary
Howard
Front: Jack Howard, Edna Currie, Stan Currie, Jess
Currie, Mollie Currie, Jack Currie, Seddon Howard.*

Invariably the heat soared above 120F, the kitchen even hotter. Somehow Mum, single-handedly, managed to have soup, roast chook and vegetables, tinned peas, assorted dried or candied fruits, nuts in the shell and plum pudding or jellied fruit and ice-cream all appearing on the table at the right time. Free wine and beer, cool drinks and home-made lemon cordial were offered - cooled in two small kerosene-operated fridges, struggling to keep their temperatures low in the heat.

Most people had a "lie-down" after lunch, stretching out on cane lounges, deck-chairs or wire-framed beds on the veranda until time for a last drink before heading home. With the last of the candied fruits and my presents, I disappeared after lunch, lying on my bed to fully savour Christmas at Kathleen Valley.

Following My Dream...

Arlene Collings

In c1898 my great Grandmother Mrs. Mary Jackson and family arrived in Gwalia from New South Wales. She set up a single men's boarding house in South Gwalia.



Bob Mazza and Ian Mackay officially opening the gallery.

Her daughter Bessie married Bill Beatty in 1904 in the Gwalia Methodist church and my mother Gladys Arlene was born 1905. By 1916 Bill was the Underground Manager for The Sons of Gwalia mine and had moved to a staff house on Tower Hill.

Three doors up lived Bert and Nora Harris and family. In 1953 (I was 15) Mrs Harris offered me the Miner's Shack they had brought from Gwalia and now used as a garden shed in her Bentley garden. I was so excited, but before it could be transported to our Wattle Grove garden, sadly Mrs. Harris passed away, along with my dream.



Bob Mazza and Arlene Collings in conversation about Gwalia.

Now 61 years later my dream has come true. A piece of Gwalia in my own back garden! I have built a little wooden chalet that bears a name plate "GWALIA". The walls are covered in photos and pictures relating to Gwalia life. Many artworks are painted on old bits and pieces found on the rubbish tips of Leonora and Gwalia.

Coming from a family of avid hoarders, I have a collection of Goldfields artefacts and photos (many from my Dad Jack Puddy): his Brownie Box camera, Grandma's china, linen and a silver tea-set and the silver tea-kettle on a burner presented to Bill Beatty (Grandad) when silicosis forced him to leave the mine.



A few of Arlene's art works depicting Gwalia.

The gallery opened on 28 October 2014 as a tribute to the Goldfields people from "the Gwalia", their hopes and dreams and resilience in the face of constant danger on the mine while unearthing a rich mineral resource and contributing to economic and social development.

Thank You

The Shire of Leonora and the Gwalia Leonora Reference Group would like to thank the following:

- ◆ The National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant for a grant of \$5,720 to purchase a compactus for the archive.
- ◆ Lotterywest Interpretation Cultural Heritage Grant for \$14,620 to develop an online map.
- ◆ Matt Taylor from Pipeline Mining and Civil Contracting (PMCC) and Boyd Sprigg from Earth Australia who moved the tram to the new shed.
- ◆ Newsletter contributions from various people.

The following people who assisted with the Victorian Tea:

- ◆ Anne Skinner and Denise Lorentz for helping with flowers, setting tables etc.
- ◆ Curtin volunteers Santana, Josh, Cameron, Katie and Hayley for serving the food and help prepare and clean-up.
- ◆ Margot Epis, Tralee Cable, Robyn Horner and Zoe Scott for the loan of their tea-sets.
- ◆ Wendy Duncan, MLA for travelling from Kalgoorlie-Boulder to be the guest speaker.



The Victorian tea was held on Sunday 21 September 2014 with 40 ladies attending.

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