



THE



NEWSLETTER

NO. 89 AUGUST 2015

THE GYMPIE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

215 Brisbane Road, GYMPIE. QLD 4570

P.O. Box 626, GYMPIE. QLD 4570

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Email: info@gympiegoldmuseum.com.au www.gympiegoldmuseum.com.au

**ELECTED OFFICERS
at A.G.M. 5.8.15**

President:

Frank Lightfoot

Tel: 54833965

Secretary:

Ralph Richardson

Tel: 54839418

Mob: 0408616709

Treasurer/Editor:

Marilyn Soanes

Tel: 54845211

**Senior Vice President/
Historian:**

Bennett Suthers

Tel: 54823315

Mob: 0412434961

**Junior Vice President/
Historian:**

Allan Blackman

Tel: 54828828

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OTHER POSITIONS HELD:

Property Officer:

& Firearms Licensee

Ron Owen

with Assistant Jo Carson

Publicity Officer:

Max Travis

Tel: 54812157

Museum Markets

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month

SEPTEMBER dates: 6TH, 20TH

(7 a.m.-12 noon)

Site Bookings to Museum Café 54 823995

Come along and browse the markets
for some bargains and catch up with friends!

Entertainment by the Gympie Museum

Re-enactment Group will be on the
3rd Sunday of each month

NEXT PERFORMANCE 20TH September 9 a.m.

2015 EVENT:

STEAM FESTIVAL 3rd/4th/5th October

FINAL REMINDER

Membership Renewals 2015/6 are now due

Note: Members are deemed financial up to 2 months after 30th June 2015.

THE GENERAL MEETING will be held on WEDNESDAY 7TH OCTOBER 2015

at 7.00 p.m. upstairs of the Gold Room.

Business includes: Work Projects

The Silence is truly Golden

Extract from Sundowner Dec. 1979/Jan. 1980

Silent and deserted, the old retort house stands like a sentinel among the ruins of the once-famous Scottish Gympie Gold Mine.

The goldfield's only surviving mining building, it is being preserved, to become part of the Gympie Historical Museum.

Behind the name lies a story of riches won after years of frustration and uncertainty.

Situated at the south-eastern extremity of the goldfield, the mine was begun in 1885 as the No. 1 Eastern, and abandoned as a duffer. The lease was taken up by others, who called it Eastern Monkland and soon afterwards tried to sell it, but without success.

Then came Matthew Laird, an adventurous young man-of-many-parts from Glasgow, who liked what he saw in the colony of Queensland and decided to settle here. His travels brought him to Gympie, where he studied the goldfield intensively and satisfied himself, against the opinion of almost all mining men, that the Eastern Monkland had a bright and profitable future.

Unable to obtain backing locally, Laird returned to Scotland and at Glasgow floated the Scottish Gympie Gold Mining Company.

The Eastern Monkland, then down to 670 feet, was purchased in 1895 for 4,000 pounds and re-named Scottish, and soon from this locally-despised venture there began to emerge a golden harvest that was to continue for 30 years.

There were no Australian shareholders, and all board meetings were held at Glasgow.

Matthew Laird became the first manager, and there were eventually three shafts associated with the mine, all being connected underground, the original No. 1 reaching a vertical depth of 2,500 feet.

Double-decked cages worked ceaselessly bringing the gold-bearing quartz to the surface to feed the crushing battery of 125 stampers, each weighing half a ton, which thundered night and day through the years to crush more than one and a half million tons.

The particles of gold, freed from the quartz by crushing, were picked up by mercury deposited on copper plates, and this amalgam was heated in the iron retorts to again free the mercury from the gold, which was then smelted and poured into iron moulds to form ingots of bullion.

The total yield of gold was 608,279 ounces or approximately 22 tons, valued at that time at 2.5 million pounds. Wages absorbed 820,000 pounds and the Scottish shareholders received 600,000 pounds in dividends. The most productive year was 1906, with 45,000 ounces and the employment of 500 men.

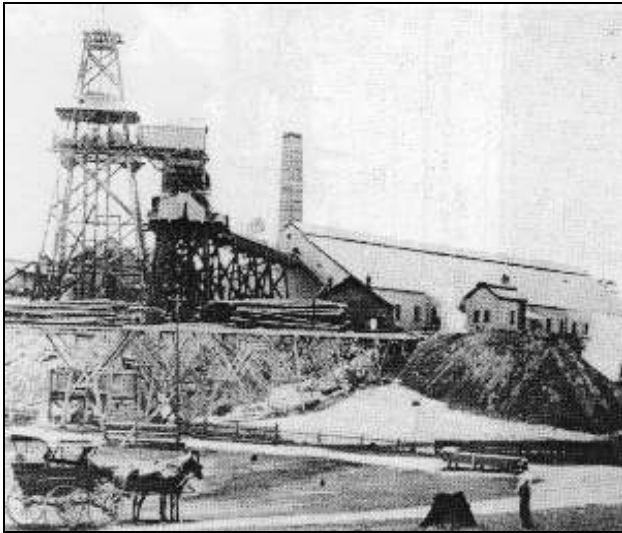
The retort house, now an empty shell, is still a sound structure, and the huge brick chimney which housed the retorts is a tribute to the workmanship of 80 years ago. Original equipment to be replaced will provide a nostalgic reminder of a day that is past.

In imagery only will visitors see the roaring furnaces and the glowing crucibles pouring a golden stream into the moulds waiting to receive it.

Retort House Photos...

(Left) The Retort House can be seen to the right in the photo.

The Scottish Gympie Gold Mine in 1907



An early photo of the Retort House



Thankyou to Allan Blackman for these recent photos below showing the progress of restoration to the Retort House.



Talented local bricklayer Andrew Hosking, and his team are doing fantastic work on the almost 120 year old retort house. They have replaced some crumbling brickwork with old bricks, and are repointing all the eroded lime mortar in the traditional style.

Although the structure had suffered neglect for many years, it is finally getting some tlc.

The next task is to replace the missing windows which contributed to the brickwork problem.



Exhibits...



Breakfast Oats has been a popular choice of cereal during the winter months.

The grain from which TIGER OATS are prepared is grown in a climate of perennial sunshine, and, consequently possesses that nutrition, sweetness, and nutty flavour absent from that produced in cold moist climates.

They are selected from the choicest grain, and are prepared and packed in the latest and most up-to-date factory in the world. Ingenious machinery is used, whereby the use of human hand is not necessary in the course of preparation, thus ensuring absolute purity and wholesomeness.

This tin was donated and is displayed in the House - an example of Mrs Rita Lees-Dowdle's collection collected over 40 years.

The advertising shows 'A Double Cooker makes the best porridge'!

A recipe shown on the tin is Breakfast Cakes. Take the porridge when cold, cut into slices, and dip into batter, made of eggs and flour. Fry on a griddle until brown, and serve with syrup and sugar.

To-day there is a choice of brands,
and this breakfast cereal is known as Rolled Oats.

The New Crown Dover No. 7 Wood Stove was made in Brisbane by Crown Stove Foundry Co., and is included in the Bungawatta Hut display.

On the stove are the cast iron frying pan, pot, kettle, hot plate lifter, three oven bread tin, and of course the wooden stirring spoon. At the top right-hand side of the wall is the meat safe.



Taking a step back in radio...

This photograph of C E Whittingham's Radio Shop counter was donated by Geoff Whittingham.

Lighthouse Oval...

Just Clowning around!!



After the 2nd August Sunday market, these clowns suddenly appeared on the Lighthouse Oval - definitely eye-catching for the Bruce Highway traffic!!

James Henry Ashton founded the first Australian Circus in the early 1800's, and the Ashton Circus Family are the oldest Circus family in Australia.

The Ashton entertainment is a circus and performing arts.

Coming Event...

The **Gympie Steam Festival** celebrates the contribution of steam power to the development of the region. The recommissioning of the remains of the original stamper battery powered by the portable Paxman boiler. Demonstrations of the Walker winding engine and Thompson compressor powered by the Cornish boiler. Operation of steam pumps and generator Brown Boveri steam engine and Australian made horizontal engine both powered by the Galion Vertical Boiler. Model steam engines powered by Carmicheal boiler, hot air engines, and miniature railway operating. Exhibitors are welcome, and there is free camping.

Enquiries to Ralph - Phone 0408616709. The **October** Programme is below (subject to change)

Saturday 3rd 9.00 a.m. Small engine demonstrations, private collections, and Gold recovery tables demonstrations, boiler operation, and pre-heating of the Cornish boiler

1.00 p.m. Formal re commissioning of the big stamper by Gympie Regional Council Mayor Mick Curran., Operation and demonstrations in Stamper shed of all equipment.

Sunday 4th 8.30 a.m. Promotional demonstration at markets, Miniature train rides, and Cornish boiler brought up to working pressure

1.00 p.m. Winding shed operating and demonstrations

Monday 5th 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. All equipment operating subject to operator availability.

Work in Progress...



(Left)

Welding has now been completed on the radio tower, the next task being repainting.

(Right)

Luke and Craig are constructing the wagon wheel for the bullock wagon.



President's Report August 2015

Welcome to members, committee and guest.

We have had a fairly successful year, much work having been done in the Stamper Shed.

The latest items being the portable boiler and steam engine driving a quantity of shafts, pulleys etc. driving an assortment of items.

The old Wonga School is almost completed, floor sanding, painting etc. Downstairs is our new workshop, well fitted out.

The old tin shed has been upgraded, extended and painted for our ambulance display. The vehicle is 1923 Austin. It is a replica of ambulance of that era and the equipment used at this time.

The fire station is a new building. It houses Gympie's original fire truck, along with an assortment of hoses, helmets, and protective clothing of different styles used over the years.

The horsedrawn vehicles, drays, sulkies, buckboard and other passenger types of buggies are now housed in a new building.

Much work is in progress on the decking on the gantry, some of the old decking are being cleaned and painted while some has been replaced with new timbers, which has had several coats of paint.

Some of the machines in the Stamper Shed will be removed shortly and located elsewhere. Duck pond end of the stamper shed has had some alteration to allow the crane to access the machinery.

The foundation for a large twelve cylinder motor is ready for its arrival.

We are short of volunteers. There are still many repair jobs to be done. The volunteers that we have are doing a tremendous amount of work mainly under the direction of Secretary Ralph.

We the committee and members send out best wishes to long time volunteer Allan Soanes during his current illness. I visited him at his home on Monday afternoon. He went back to hospital on Tuesday morning for more treatment.

I am standing down as President. I am not as active as have been, but I hope to be of some value in the future.

Bennett Suthers

The Ambulance will be on loan to the Ambulance Committee on 5th September for an Ambulance week function

Thankyou to Allan Blackman who demonstrated gold panning at Kybong Rock & Mineral Fest held on 31st July, 1st and 2nd August, and also for the transporting of the gold panning tubs.

* * * * *

Readers, do you know where the One Mile Post Office building is located?

**From information I have at hand, the building is located
on the corner of Harkins Street & Graham Street. Ed.**

* * * * *

One Mile Post Office...

(Extract from Sundowner March 1978)

One Mile Post Office has been the home of Mrs L M Patch since her late husband took over as postmaster more than 50 years ago.

Constructed in 1879, the attractive timber building is now converted into two flats with the front verandah glassed and the postal office serving as a living room.

The red cedar counter has been retained as a divider. The public phone booth is a store room.

By the 1920's the great Gympie mining boom was all but over. Gold was, however, still consigned from One Mile Post Office.

The Post Office was a focal point for the thriving One Mile community. Pension day was a real outing. More than 150 pensions were collected regularly. Dozens of people gathered in the shade of a tall cherry tree in front of the Post Office.

Payments by cheque drastically reduced this flow of people.

Time brought great changes to the One Mile. Gone today are the five hotels, the police station, railway station and several stores.

"It's not what it used to be," say Mrs Patch.

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