

Gwalia Timeline



1896 Gold discovered near Mt Leonora

Sons of Gwalia lease 190C registered by Coolgardie storekeepers Thomas and Ernest Tobias after gold discovered by three prospectors, J Carlson, A Glendinning and F White. Exploration financed by the Tobias brothers.

Men were first put on in September last year, and in January developments showed the property worthy a battery. In the face of the slump, when the most powerful syndicates were curtailing every possible item of outlay, Mr. Hall pushed boldly on, secured a good 10-head mill and also its safe transport over the 200 miles of country between Coolgardie and its destina-

1897 Sons of Gwalia lease sold to GW Hall

GW Hall, working for the London and Western Australia Company, purchases Sons of Gwalia lease for £5,000 (\$10,000). Entire capital investment recouped in the first month of mining.



1898 Bewick, Moreing & Co. floats mine on Stock Exchange

On the advice of American mining engineer Herbert Hoover, the mine is acquired by London-based Bewick, Moreing & Co. Sons of Gwalia Company launched on the London Stock Exchange. Hoover appointed mine manager, starts building the mine complex, including Hoover House. Hoover redesigns the underground workings, sinking a new incline shaft at 45°. This involves relocating the mine entrance and installing new haulage machinery.



1899 Premier John Forrest attends Gold Bar Dinner

Premier John Forrest visits the Sons of Gwalia Mine and attends a luncheon (the 'Gold Bar Dinner') in the dining room of the Manager's House on 3 April, soon after the house is completed.



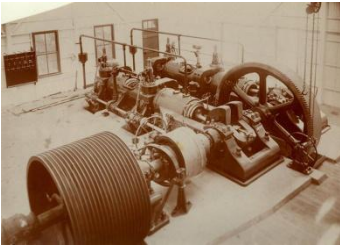
1900 Gold production soars

Gold production surpasses 90,000 ounces. Production and profits increase, 500 men employed on the mine and a 50-head mill completed.



1901 Residential lots surveyed

Residential lots surveyed in Gwalia. 884 people live in Gwalia by year's end (314 in Leonora). School and tramway opened.



1913 New steam winder installed

The old winder engine struggles to cope with hauling the ore and is replaced with a Fraser and Chalmers steam-powered winding engine. Headframe raised to 62 feet to accommodate new winder.



1914-1918 (World War I)

Gas producers to generate electricity and a cyanide plant to treat the ore are installed. About 400 men employed at Sons of Gwalia in 1915, but many leave to enlist in the war.



1921 Fire destroys half the mine

An 'unexplainable' fire on 19 January 1921 destroys the gas power station and mill, leaving the slime treatment plant and haulage equipment intact. Reconstruction begins and insurers pay out £90,000 (\$180,000). Almost entire workforce of 400 men laid off.



1929 Mine recovers

Mine is redeveloped and an incline shaft sunk below 4000ft (1219m). Dina Patroni takes over Ryan's Boarding House and changes the name to Patroni's Guest Home. Herbert Hoover becomes 31st United States President.



1931 Gold price increases

Gold price rise to £4 (\$8) per ounce and returns mine to profit.



1939-1945 (World War II)

Italians in labour force interned; many never return to the mine. By 1946, labour force down to 100 men. The mine operates at a loss and exploration and expansion cease.



1958 Profits decline

Mine profit £41 (\$82) on 30,000 ounces of gold. Extraction rates are high but ore grades fall.



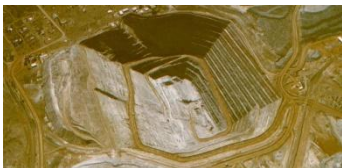
1963 Sons of Gwalia Mine closes

6 December - Directors' meet to discuss mine's losses and discouraging geological reports. 13 December - Decision to close mine on 31 December announced. 27 December - Accident causes damage to headframe and underground operations cease. 28 December - Mine closes three days early. Extra trains arranged to manage the exodus of people leaving their homes and belongings. Gwalia's population drops from 1,200 to 40 in less than three weeks.



1964 State Hotel and Mazza's Store closes

Gwalia State Hotel and VB & MM Mazza closes. Western Mining Corporation leases mine buildings.



1983 Open pit era

Sons of Gwalia NL is floated on Perth Stock Exchange. Open pit mining commences.



2005 New mining phase begins

Sons of Gwalia NL go into receivership. The assets of Sons of Gwalia NL are purchased by St Barbara Ltd which returns to underground operations. Mining at Gwalia continues to present day.