

Gwalia Newsletter

Chairperson's Report

As the new Chairperson for the Gwalia Reference Group I would like to thank you for your interest in Gwalia and for subscribing to the Gwalia ghost town & museum newsletter. In this edition of the newsletter you will read about the Shire of Leonora's achievement to be nominated as a finalist in the Heritage Awards 2014; the interactive map to guide and educate visitors on the Gwalia ghost town; archive, conservation and photographic projects and workshops held.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Jeff and Judy Carter for their involvement over many years at Gwalia. Since the establishment of the Gwalia Reference Group (GRG) in 2012, Jeff was the Chairperson and Judy served as committee member and was secretary for a short while.

Jeff and Judy both never hesitated to do hands-on work around Gwalia ghost town and the museum and helped with the 50th anniversary weekend in September 2013 to commemorate the Closure of the Sons of Gwalia mine. They both served on the Shire of Leonora Council with Jeff as Shire President from 2009 - 2013. In late January 2014 Jeff and Judy after 37 years exchanged the red dust of Leonora for the blue waters of Jurien Bay.

Sarah Zimmerman (nee Mazza), is also leaving Leonora after being in the role of Events Coordinator for the Shire of Leonora since 2009. Sarah assisted with many projects such as the 50th anniversary weekend in September 2013, the annual Golden Gift, the Tidy Towns project and the Leonora Loop Trail. Thank you Sarah for your willingness to give a helping hand wherever it was needed.

The newsletter has been very well received from the first edition in December 2012. We are pleased that so many readers now contribute to the newsletter. Leonora and Gwalia co-existed in the past and continues to do so and with many people having a link to both places, a page of the newsletter will be dedicated to an article about Leonora.

The Gwalia Reference Group aims to complete a number of planned projects within the next year and envisage developing new initiatives for Gwalia ghost town & museum in the future.

Matt Taylor
Chairperson:
Gwalia Reference Group



Sarah Zimmermann, Jeff & Judy Carter
Photo taken by: Anne Skinner

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Heritage Award Finalist 2014

Elaine Labuschagne

The Shire of Leonora is proud to announce that it is a finalist in the Western Australian Heritage Award 2014 for the category:

Outstanding Heritage Practices by a Local Government.

This category is to acknowledge a local government that demonstrates an outstanding whole-of-agency approach to the commitment and promotion of cultural heritage and/or heritage-related work, services or programs in Western Australia.

The Shire of Leonora recognises the importance of preserving the heritage in its care. As custodians of a significant part of Western Australia's heritage, the Shire of Leonora takes its responsibility seriously and believes in investing financial and human resources in the conservation and maintenance of buildings, structures and other significant heritage assets to ensure the continuing existence of the Shire's heritage for the enjoyment and education of the community and visitors.

The Award ceremony is on 3 April 2014, and we will let you know of the outcome.



Historic Miners' Cottages at Gwalia ghost town



Gwalia Interactive Map goes live!

Elaine Labuschagne

Why not navigate your way around the historical Gwalia ghost town & museum using your smartphone or tablet?



Jim Epis, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Leonora and Elaine Labuschagne, Manager Economics & Heritage Services accessing the Gwalia map.

An innovative interactive digital map was launched on Monday, 24 February 2014, bringing the history of this State Heritage listed Site with its old miners' cottages and buildings to life.

The development of the interactive map formed part of the new Gwalia ghost town & museum website, used to promote and market Gwalia. The website was launched late last year while the design of the map expanded to include use on devices such as tablets and smartphones. The implementation of this multi-media application, brings Gwalia ghost town & museum in-line with current web technology.

Shire of Leonora President, Cr Peter Craig said: "The Shire of Leonora would like to thank Lotterywest for funding the development of a new website and the interactive map. We encourage visitors to use the Gwalia interactive map, which is an excellent tool for the presentation of information about Gwalia."

The map is customised and features 31 attractions at Gwalia ghost town & museum. Visitors are invited to explore the site and click on one of the illustrations, then a photo of the specific attraction and information will pop-up. This gives the user the control to change the visuals and focus their browser on the information that they are interested in viewing.

The map can be downloaded from www.gwalia.org.au/map/ Make sure you download the correct version for either a smartphone or tablet.

Download a QR code reader App on your phone or tablet and scan in the QR Code to go directly to the map.

You can also access the map from the website and do a virtual tour of Gwalia from behind your computer.

The map makes it easy for visitors to explore Gwalia ghost town & museum at their leisure, in an engaging and interactive way.



Sarah Zimmerman, Events Coordinator, Shire of Leonora and Jim Epis, Chief Executive Officer in front of VB & MM Mazza's Store, Gwalia.



Gwalia Interactive Map

Discover Gwalia Ghost Town & Museum with our **FREE** online interactive map!



Use your Smart Phone or Tablet to explore 31 attractions at Gwalia Ghost Town & Museum.

Smart Phone and Tablet users

Please use our web app version of the map by visiting www.gwalia.org.au/map, or scan the QR code below.

How to use this QR Code

1. Download and install a QR Code reader on your smart phone or tablet. Many free options are available through the Apple or Android app stores.
2. Use the QR Code reader to scan our unique code.
3. Open the link which will take you straight to Gwalia's Online Interactive map! For best results, be sure to select the map version best suited to your device.



Stirring up stories...

Margie Lundy

Leonora-Gwalia stories sit silently waiting to be told in the Archive Room at the Gwalia Museum.

Did you know that this magnificent resource is available to you to help research your family stories and what was going on in this very special place around them during their lives here?



Margie Lundy with the Railage Book that contains the accession register, visitor book

Since the beginning of the year I've spent around twenty days of surprises (in two interludes of ten days each) working as a volunteer on a Project, organised by Elaine Labuschagne (Manager of Economic and Heritage Services, Shire of Leonora) to assess the current state and condition of some of the archives in this Archive Room - the collected history of this remarkable Shire.

I'm part of the history too, you see, because I was posted to Leonora as a young teacher straight from Teachers' College in 1969. When I left two years later, I thought I knew a bit about Leonora-Gwalia's history and its people.

However, with Elaine's guidance, I've just unwrapped and checked over one hundred and twenty meticulously wrapped and catalogued oversized ledgers, journals and certificates *and* opened almost three dozen boxes of beautifully preserved letters, hospital and school journals, photographs, catalogues, mining claims, etc. Now I realise, I really knew so very little!

Gems uncovered during this Project include the original Gwalia Historical Gallery Accession Register. This Register was started in the last of a set of fifteen ledgers, the Sons of Gwalia Railage Books, donated to the Museum after the underground mining operations closed at the end of 1963. Local voluntary historians were so keen to make a record of items that had been donated to the Museum and document some of the stories behind the donations, and this barely started, exquisitely bound and very large ledger was ideal!

What struck me about this Register was the three main stories it had to tell - its first, as a record of goods railed to and from the Sons of Gwalia mine in its closing stages; its second, as a register of items donated to what became the Gwalia Museum Collection and finally, as the Visitors' Book that guests signed at the official opening of the Museum in 1972.

A couple of other 'finds' for me were a couple of journals kept by past school 'Headmasters' (including entries for the years I taught here!), the *Liber Defunctorum* (the Leonora Roman Catholic Church 'Book Of the Dead' from 1903 - 1948 in Latin) and, unexpectedly, a boot maker's journal from a Leonora-Gwalia business of early last century.

There are still *many* items to be checked. If you think you'd like to volunteer in some way to help maintain this heritage, why not speak with Elaine, Gail or Gary to ask how. I'd certainly recommend the experience!

**The Shire of Leonora would like to thank
Margie Lundy
for volunteering her time and contributing her
valuable skills and knowledge to the project at the Gwalia Archive**

Preserving the Museum’s Historical Images

Gail Ross, Museum Manager

Currently at the museum Gail and Gary are in the process of scanning photographs which have been accumulating over many years of being gifted and donated. It is a very slow process in searching the records to discover whether they are an original or print, we do this by searching through the archive records and computer files.

Once they are scanned onto the computer, the images will be replaced with prints throughout the whole museum, however with the start of the new tourist season fast approaching us the process will now have to be put on hold for a later date.



Gail Ross, Museum Manager, hanging a framed photograph.

After completion of the project all the photos will be on the computer and this will make the process of ordering an image much easier. The originals will be encapsulated and put away for safe keeping.



Gary Ross scans the photographs and enters data into the computer.



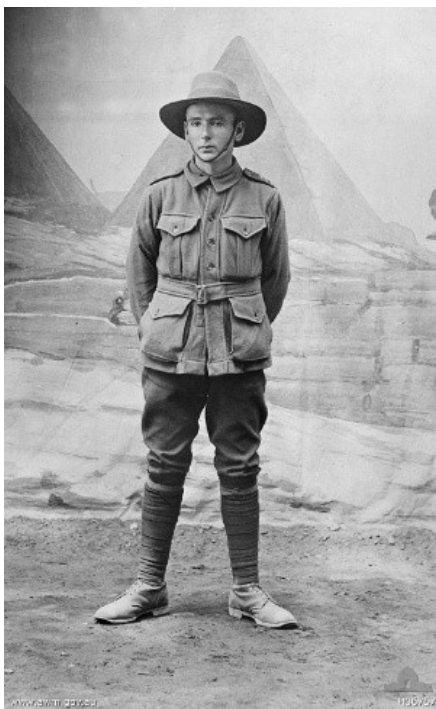
Leonora Fire Brigade , 1933—Example of a photograph that was on display.



Gail Ross, Museum Manager, in the process of framing a copy of a photograph.

Gwalia Mine Labourer Killed in Action

Anne Skinner



Former Sons of Gwalia labourer 2051 Private John Francis Williams was killed in action at Pozieres in 1916.

hospital during the mumps epidemic.

He embarked at Alexandria for the trenches of the Western Front on 9 June 1916, but it wasn't long before he was in trouble again, this time for drinking on duty, for which was awarded 28 days field punishment No.2 (sentenced to hard labour in addition to his normal military duties).

The 16th Battalion's first major battle in France was at Pozieres where, on 12 August, just over a year after he waded ashore at Gallipoli carrying the weight of his rifle, pack and the grief of his brother's death, Pte Williams was killed in action.

A letter written by his commanding officer stated that he was struck in the chest and killed instantly by a shell during heavy enemy fire as the battalion was being relieved from the front line.

Several months later, his sorrowing parents received his few possessions – letters from home, photos, a note book and a pencil. In 1922 his father sent photographs of his two sons to Army headquarters with a plea for them to be “installed in the British War Museum”. The photos are in the collection of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

As with so many graves dug hastily during the mayhem of battle, the location of Pte Williams' final resting place was lost and he is commemorated on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial.

He is also listed on the Sons of Gwalia Honour Board which will be the centrepiece of the Shire of Leonora's World War 1 commemorations in 2015.

When former Sons of Gwalia mine labourer John Williams landed at Gallipoli, he probably knew his elder brother was already dead.

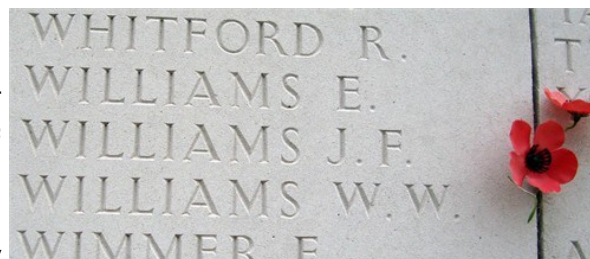
The sons of Henry and Ellen Williams of Dardanup enlisted at Blackboy Hill within six weeks of each other – 23-year-old Percy on 20 November 1914 and 21-year-old John on 1 January 1915. Percy, a mill hand before enlisting, landed at Gallipoli with the 16th Battalion on the afternoon of 25 April 1915. Three weeks later, while his younger brother was still steaming across the Indian Ocean, 1534 Private Percy James Williams was shot in the stomach. He died on the hospital ship Gascon on 19 May and was buried at sea.

Reaching Gallipoli on July 28 with the 5th reinforcements of the 16th Battalion, 2051 Private John Francis Williams soon succumbed to the raging dysentery in the hot, insanitary conditions on the peninsula.

On his way to recovery, he was docked seven days' pay for “altering paybook without permission” before returning to the Gallipoli trenches, where he served until the evacuation. The battalion was stationed in Egypt for the next five months and Pte Williams spent nine days in



John Williams' elder brother 1534 Private Percy James Williams, who has no known connection to the Goldfields, was killed at Gallipoli.



Pte John Williams is commemorated on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial.

Being a boarder at Leonora Convent

Jean Lyneham, nee Moriarty

At Kathleen Valley, 120 miles north of Leonora, I lived in a 1890s corrugated iron coaching inn on the Wiluna road. I did Correspondence School until funds from the wool boom (1946-c1955) sent me to Leonora Convent.



Boarders at Dominican Convent Leonora in 1951.

Back row: Left to right : Jennifer Knapp, Brenda Owen, Eleanor Delaqua ?

Middle: Patricia Hahn, Jean Moriarty, Frances O'Connor ?

Front: Margaret? McPherson

The Convent was a big shock for me and for the first eighteen months I cried desperately when my parents returned me to Leonora after the holidays. After two days, eventually resigning myself to the inedible food and being parted from my parents and many pets, I would settle down. In later years, I mostly travelled by the mail truck, usually having to sit in the open back with the mail and groceries for the seven hour journey, regardless of weather, and still crying sometimes.

Conditions in the corrugated iron convent were spartan, but not many lived comfortably then. I feel great sympathy for the nuns, who had to endure the same conditions and food, put up with wearing long, hot habits, were overworked and yet did their best to be cheerful and always willing to comfort us when we returned from home. I certainly do not blame them for my experiences.

Our daily routine started at 6.30am ready for a cold water wash in an enamel basin (the peeling tin bath with chip heater was un-used), then dress in our summer skirt, over-blouse and sandals (underwear changed weekly) or our wool tartan pleated skirt, white blouse, red cardigan, brown shoes and fawn socks in winter. A red beret was added for Sunday Mass in the Leonora church. Summer Sunday dresses were white, with a straw hat.

We attended Mass, ate our breakfast of lumpy, lukewarm porridge and a cup of weak cocoa, then household chores followed. Day kids would laugh at the boarders' playlunch of dry, curled-up bread with a thin scrape of jam and a drink of water from the waterbag, while eating their home-made cake or biscuits. I don't recall fruit at all.

Lunch - a grey stew in winter, a slice of polony, more bread and a piece of lettuce or fish cakes made from something tinned called "Frelish" (2/- a tin in 1948). Withered vegetables, stale bread and dubious cuts of meat were some of the food I snuck out, tossing it to the Cuthbertson's turkeys. No wonder I lost weight and became anaemic.

Piano practice, writing a weekly letter home, embroidery with Sister Patrick and play in the dusty yard occupied us until tea-time. We enjoyed sitting on the verandah for a sing-along with one of the sisters. Benediction followed, then into our hard beds in a prop-shuttered sleep-out, boiling in summer, freezing in winter.

Occasionally we enjoyed an outing to Malcolm Dam after rain, or we were taken to the Gwalia pool during the weekend.

With equanimity we bore what today's kids would rebel against. No-one would pay any attention to our complaints at school and my parents had no other options for my education.



Prayer book with the inscription: To Dear Jean In remembrance of her first Holy Communion 16.6.1950. With love from Mum & Dad. Pray always for us.

The Debate continues- Conservation versus Restoration

Richard Garcia

A perplexing question.

Several years ago restoration was the “in” thing. Beautiful original items were transformed into “something” that the “restorer” thought that is what it should look like or “jazzed” it up. Too late!! Once restoration is done you cannot go back and many an original object was lost, not only because it had now changed, but valuable information/history and character were destroyed. Sure, it looks great, new colours, bright and shiny with no history.

This is not to say that restoration should never be carried out, but very careful research into the object’s history, colours, materials used should be thoroughly investigated before any decisions are made to go down this path.

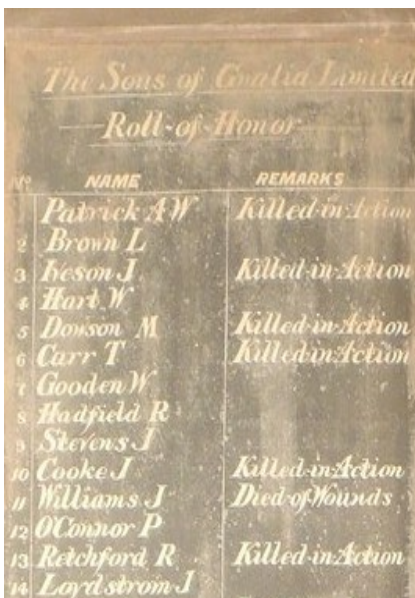
For Example: If you have more than one object exactly the same, then by the restoration process you can show what the original would have looked like after researching paints/colours, materials, etc. The replacement of dissimilar materials/parts, etc., however, renders the object a reproduction or replica and one off original objects require very serious thought before going down a restoration path.

The path today is conservation. Conservation means that you arrest any further damage/decay preventing it from further deterioration. The retention of original paints/varnishes and materials gives us a look into the past. It shows us the types of materials that were used, how they were used and their composition. Old scratches, marks or previous damage is a part of that object, giving it its character and telling us its story.

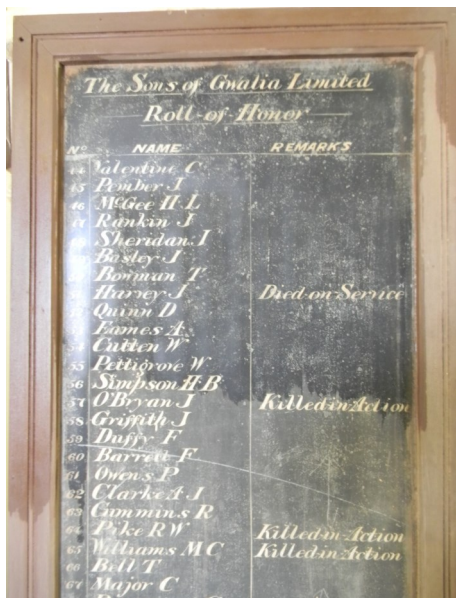
I have witnessed many fine original objects rendered worthless, not only in monetary terms but in terms of historical significance because of thoughtless regard for the object’s integrity. So remember before you feel the urge to restore, think carefully, once you start the process, there is no return and part of history may be lost.

Conservation work to the Sons of Gwalia Roll-of-Honour was recently completed and the Honour Board is now back at the Gwalia Museum. Staff from the Conservation Department of the Western Australian Museum are always available to assist the public with enquiries relating to conservation and/or restoration matters.

Richard Garcia is the Manager, Technological Objects Department of Materials Conservation Western Australian Museum.



The Sons of Gwalia WWI Honour Board before conservation work



Note the difference between before and after the conservation work



After conservation work was completed

Conservation Projects

An Illuminated Address for Peter Hill, 1st Mayor of Malcolm Ian Day

An illuminated address is a dedication or certificate of appreciation presented by an organisation or community for outstanding service, or perhaps for sporting achievements. Most illuminated



The illuminated address given to Peter Hill. The first of the photographs depicts Mr Hill; the second is of his wife. The third shows their pub, while the fourth

addresses surviving today date from the period between mid-Victorian times and WWII. The precursors of the illuminated address are the early Christian manuscripts from northern Europe, such as the Book of Kells. These were created in monasteries by monks who worked by rushlight or candle to create richly illustrated documents from the most expensive materials, celebrating the Christian message. These manuscripts are among the world's great art treasures. Like their early predecessors, illuminated addresses also feature ornate calligraphy and detailed artwork; sometimes amateurish and sometimes breathtaking.

Working at Gwalia recently, I was asked to do conservation work on one from the latter category. At first glance, the illuminated address for Peter Hill did not look promising.

The frame had been cut down from one much bigger and was very dirty. At some stage wedges had been forced into the mismatched corners; the entire assemblage held together with heavy screws. The back of the frame was dirty and it appeared toxic. However, when the back was opened and the address removed from the frame, the effort was worthwhile. The address was beautiful. It had rich watercolour paint showing cherubs and theatrical curtains, pure gold leaf curlicues and four photographs glued onto what appeared to be thick card. It wasn't in good condition.

The entire piece was buckled; the gold was peeling off and the emulsion on the photos dry and flaking. It had been made in 1902 and presented to Peter Hill, the first Mayor of Malcolm when he left the town and retired to the south coast. Mr Hill had been the town's publican and had reluctantly agreed to stand for Mayor when everybody else refused the job. When elected, he was carried shoulder-high into his pub for the celebrations.

I took the address to Kalgoorlie to work on it and when it was unpacked, the first job was to ascertain exactly what materials it was made from. When examined under a lens, what had appeared to be card or paper proved to be animal fibre. It was vellum, made from the inner tissues of uncured animal skin. Vellum is extremely expensive and hard to obtain (most so-called 'vellum' on the market today is made of wood pulp). The fact that in 1902, somebody in Malcolm had made the effort to get a sheet of genuine vellum and then created a beautiful tribute by hand (and probably by lamplight) shows the esteem in which Mr Hill was held.

Because the address was made of vellum and not of paper or card as first thought, the conservation treatment had to be rethought. Vellum behaves like leather, and can become extremely brittle. Therefore, any attempt to flatten it out would be disastrous. It was placed in a sealed room for 1 month and surrounded by containers of water (humidified). As the water evaporated, it was absorbed by the vellum, gradually softening it. When this treatment was complete, the address was gently cleaned before being placed into a custom-made box and delivered back to Gwalia.

Collections Care Workshop

Ian Day

On the 14th January 2014 a workshop was held in the Archives Room at the Gwalia Museum. The workshops was organised by the Shire of Leonora.

Although ostensibly about box making and paper conservation, the topics explored were wide-ranging.

The first session was presented by Elaine Labuschagne and addressed the correct ways to handle and move museum objects – things to be aware of, correct techniques and things to avoid.

After morning tea, Ian day, CollectionsCare Goldfields, presented a session. Using items from Gwalia's Collection, the history of papermaking was discussed – the different materials that paper was made from, the different printing techniques that were used; all of which have implications upon the accurate dating and conservation of paper items.

The discussion about paper segued into one about photography – how to identify different types and methods of photography, and the implications these hold for accurate identification, conservation and storage.

The workshop then moved into the 'hands-on' phase. Participants were shown some of the basic conservation techniques used to clean and repair documents, before being invited to apply some of these skills to a 1950 aerial photo of Gwalia Township under guidance of Ian.



Ian day, CollectionsCare coordinator, explain how to care for photographs. Anne Skinner, Tralee Cable and Margie Lundy look on.



Anne Skinner and Tralee Cable access the photographs and determine the right course of action.



A custom made box and tray for the storage of the illuminated address for Peter Hill

After lunch, Ian continued the practical work with on a session on making an archival box, complete with insert tray to securely hold the contents.

Thank You

We would like to thank the following:

- ◇ Back to Gwalia group in Perth for their kind donation of \$1,000 towards the 50th anniversary weekend held in September 2013.
 - ◇ Margie Lundy for volunteering her services.
 - ◇ The writers of articles who contribute to this newsletter.
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Friends of Gwalia Renewals

Gail Ross - Museum Manager

Happy New Year everyone, although a little late. Now that our memberships are up and running and we are pleased that we have a lot of members join, it is time to standardise the renewals. Renewals will now be open from the 1st May and close on the 30th June each year, which will make it easier for everyone to remember. Any renewal or new membership that has already been received in January and February are now not required to renew until May 2015. On behalf of the Gwalia Reference group I would like to thank all our current members for your support and look forward to hearing from any new ones.

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

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