

Generous Donation to new Goldfields Museum

The sumptuous Kalgoorlie office of legendary mining entrepreneur Claude de Bernales was the scene of many fortunes changing hands during the early years of gold-mining in Western Australia.

Last month, the restored de Bernales Room was the setting for a transaction of another kind, one that brought Kalgoorlie's new Museum of the Goldfields a step closer to completion. Western Mining Corporations's Director of Finance and Administration Mr Don Morley presented a cheque for \$75,000 to Museum curator Mrs Jill Moffat to cover the cost of the new display system at the Museum. The Museum of the Goldfields will be formally established as a Branch of the Western Australian Museum on 9 December this year.

Historic office moved

The occasion was a double celebration as it also marked the inauguration of the de Bernales Room as part of the new Branch. The cost of moving the historic office from its original position on Boulder Road was sponsored by Frank Lubbock and Associates, whose Managing Director Mr Clive Annear was present at the ceremony.

The office, built for Claude de Bernales around 1909, reflects both the flamboyant tastes of the goldfields entrepreneur, and the down-to-earth frontier atmosphere of Kalgoorlie in the early 1900s. While the interior is furnished in the grand manner, with jarrah woodwork and a pressed metal ceiling, the outside is a simple timber-framed structure clad in galvanised iron, with a timber frontage on to the street.

'The man with the Midas touch' Claude de Bernales was one of the most controversial and flamboyant personalities in the history of gold-mining in Western Australia.

Born in England in 1876, he began his business career in WA selling mining



machinery. He made, and in due course lost, a fortune on the eastern goldfields, and by the Forties his vast network of companies had been forced into liquidation. The Bernales Group came under the scrutiny of Scotland Yard and the British Attorney General, but no action was brought against him and he lived for many years as a recluse in a mansion at Selsey Bill, Chichester until his death in 1963 at the age of 87.

This photo of Claude de Bernales office (occupant unknown) was probably taken during the 1920s.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The British Discovery of Australia

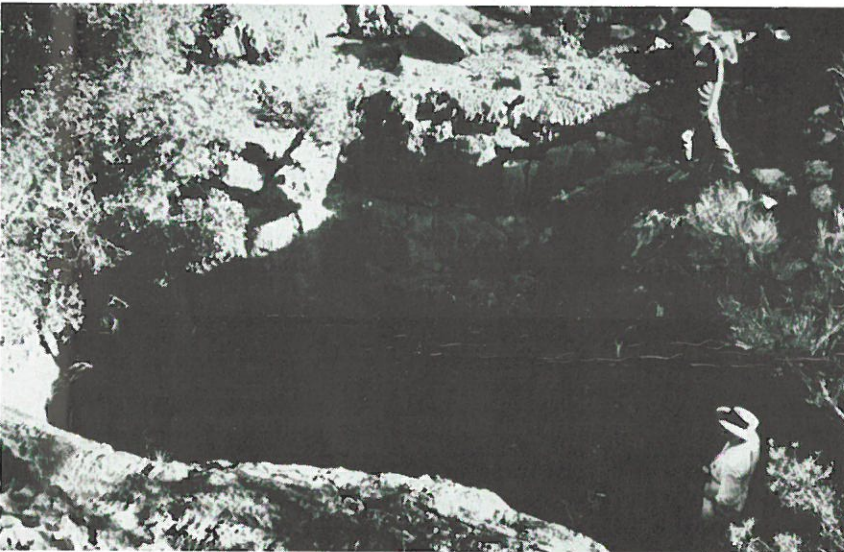
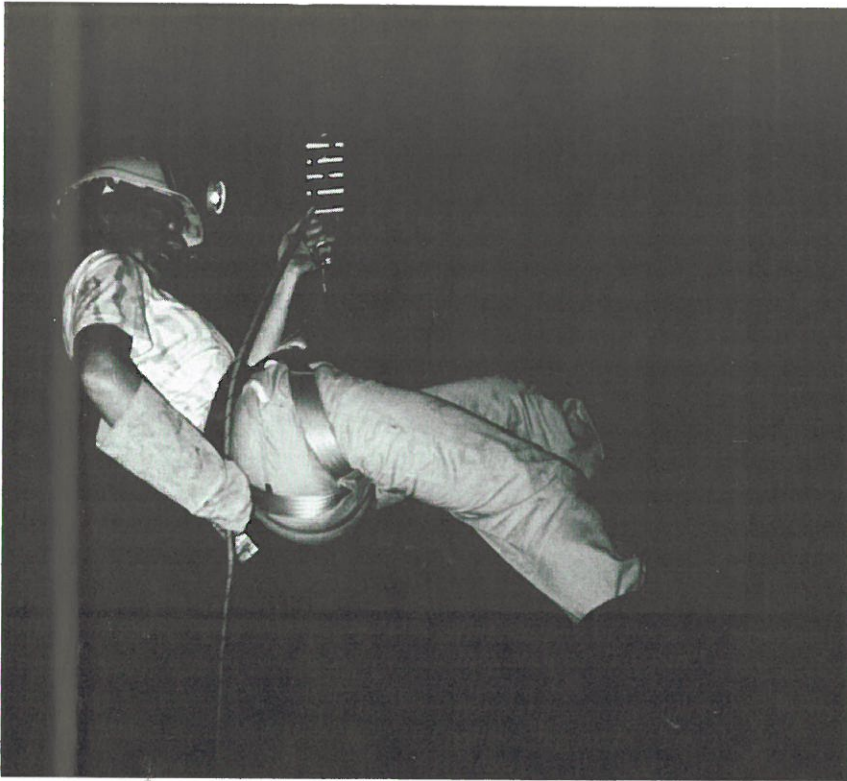
Coming to the WA Museum



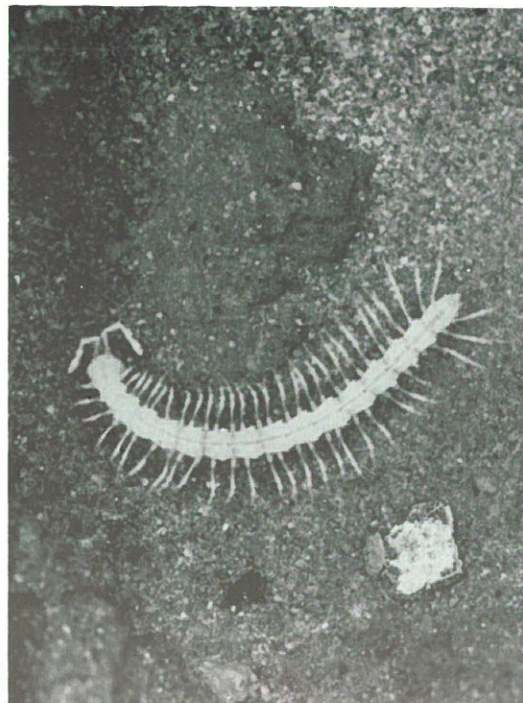
February 17—April 9

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Take a closer
look at your
museum



(Top) Museum honorary worker Rae Young arrives at the bottom; (Above) entrance to the deepest cave; (right) blind cave millipede and cricket.



In the Caves of Cape Range

Abseiling into dark, uncharted holes in the ground, some up to 80 km long, could be considered, even by the most questioning scientists, as being above and beyond the call of duty. In a recent two-month expedition in the Cape Range, led by Dr Bill Humphreys of the Museum's Department of Biogeography and Ecology, participants were coaxed down ropes into yawning cavities, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, to study and collect specimens of fauna.

In the depths of some of the 206 caves discovered to date at Cape Range on the North West Cape peninsula, the team uncovered a number of troglobites — blind, colourless and long-limbed animals adapted to cave life. Including spiders, micro-whip scorpions, millipedes, false scorpions and primitive insects and crickets, these creatures presumably moved into the caves at a time when the area, now semi-arid, was much wetter. Also found were animals which could not survive current conditions on the earth's surface.

Although it is known that these creatures were isolated in the caves some time between 15,000 and 30 million years ago, the actual age of the caves is still unknown.

Both volunteers and specialists took part in the expedition, and the physically demanding, time consuming and expensive task of finding new caves was done almost entirely by local residents. The project is jointly funded by the Museum and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.



Limited Edition Replica

Mr Jim Murphy of Bond International is pictured here presenting Museum Director John Bannister with No. 001 of a Limited Edition Replica of the Dirk Hartog Plate, produced by the Australian Collectors Treasury in conjunction with the Western Australian Museum.

The Hartog Plate, nailed to a post on an island in Shark Bay by Dirk Hartog in 1616, is regarded as the first known European artefact discovered in Australia. The limited edition replica was launched at the WA Maritime Museum on October 24, eve of the anniversary of the Hartog landing. Enquiries from would-be purchasers can be made on (02) 290 2677.



Jim Murphy of Bond International (left) and Museum Director John Bannister with the limited edition replica of Hartog's Plate.

Carter's Palms Rediscovered After 90 Years

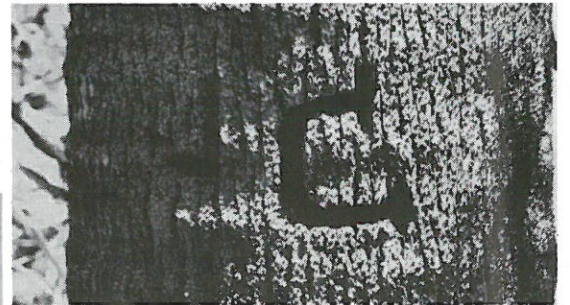
They were known as 'Carter's palm trees', having been first reported in 1898 by Thomas Carter of Point Cloates near Cape Range.

He was shown 'some wonderful trees' by Aboriginal people and found them in a small basin of good soil surrounded by bad ranges. 'I am informed,' he wrote, 'that they are cabbage tree palms, which only grow in one other part of the colony so far as is known.'

Until this year the existence of Carter's trees has been doubted by scientists as no positive evidence of their survival was ever produced.

This year, however, during the Museum's Cape Range expedition, the three cabbage-tree palms (*Livistona alfredii*) were re-discovered, one with a set of initials carved in its trunk (but not TC as originally reported).

Carter's trees are in the proposed extension to Cape Range National Park, and are the only *Livistona* of any species known from the Carnarvon Geological Basin, presumably a relic population from a time when Cape Range had a wetter climate.



'Carter's palm trees' discovered by Darren Brooks and Brian Vine; and initials carved in the trunk.

New Aboriginal Heritage Officers

The Museum's Department of Aboriginal Sites now has three Aboriginal Heritage Officers located throughout the State: David Walker in Roebourne, with responsibility for the Pilbara; Marlene Bruce in

Derby, with responsibility for the Kimberley; and Joseph Wallam in Perth with responsibility for the metropolitan and South West areas. Their co-ordinator is Nicholas Green.

The appointment of these officers as permanent Museum staff reflects the Department's commitment to involving Aboriginal people in recording and protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage. It is hoped that similar positions can be funded for other areas in need.

At a recent workshop in the Field Station at Albany Residency Museum, the officers met Branch Curator Valerie Milne and her staff. Joseph Wallam recently visited Geraldton Museum to give a talk on Padjari Manu Cave as part of a visiting Fellowship Programme sponsored by Ansett WA.

Building bridges

A display entitled *Building bridges to the past, present and future* is due to travel around the State for public exhibition, and it is hoped that regional displays will soon be available for use in schools, Aboriginal communities, mining towns, shopping centres and Shire offices.



Pictured at Albany Residency Museum (l to r): David Walker, Marlene Bruce, Curator Valerie Milne and Joseph Wallam.

New Fish Book and Limited Edition Prints Launched

Co-authors Gerry Allen and Roger Swainston present a limited edition print to angling writer Ross Cusack, who launched the new Museum book on fishes of the north-west.

Fourteen years of diving, specimen collecting and research culminated in late November with the launching, in the Museum's Marine Gallery, of a new book

Marine Fishes of North-Western Australia by Curator of Fishes Dr Gerry Allen and artist Roger Swainston. A comprehensive guide to over 1000 species of reef and shore fishes from Shark Bay to Darwin and beyond, the new publication is illustrated with 70 magnificent colour plates painted by Roger Swainston. It is a companion to the successful *Marine and Estuarine Fishes of the South-West* and is now on sale throughout Western Australia at \$29.95.

At the same time the Museum embarked on a new venture - the launching of 600 limited edition prints (595 mm x 405 mm) of six selected colour plates from the new book. These superb watercolours, reproduced on quality paper, are individually numbered and signed by the artist and enclosed in a presentation folder. As no further prints will ever be made from the plates, each set is a collector's item and, as an introductory offer, they are offered for a limited time only at \$75 each, or \$400 for the full set of six. Enquiries to the Bookshop Manager on (09) 328 4411.

