

## **CAMELS, CARS, AND COMPASSES: 150 years of geological mapping in WA**

An exhibition celebrating 150 years of mapping by the Geological Survey of Western Australia is opening on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August at the Australian Miners and Prospectors Hall of Fame in Kalgoorlie.

A complete collection of the 12 State geological maps published to date illustrates how the mapping of Western Australia has progressed since its inception in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and how our geological understanding of the “million miles” State has evolved to this day. The maps include both originals and digitally enhanced copies of the oldest and more fragile maps. The State map series opens with the Nicolay's and the 1894 State maps and closes with an interactive computer display to exemplify that the future of geological maps (State and otherwise) lies in the virtual world.

The State map collection is preceded by selected historical maps that illustrate how early mapping progressed in different parts of the state. These include reproductions of the 1848 geological sketches by Ferdinand von Sommer for the areas nearest to Perth, an 1870 map covering the southern part of the state, and an 1884 map of the Kimberley published under the then Government Geologist E.T. Hardman.

A second part of the exhibition is dedicated to Andrew Gibb Maitland, who was appointed as Government Geologist in November 1986. At the request of the Minister for Mines, Maitland drew up proposals for a formal Geological Survey department within the Ministry, with staff comprising assistant geologists, chemists and an assayer, topographic surveyor, lithographic draftsman, clerk/accountant, and cadet, and the establishment of a laboratory, library, and geological museum. Gibb Maitland was the Director of the Geological Survey until 1926; his definition of the functions of the Geological Survey is still basically unchanged today.

Several selected original maps illustrate the many regions covered by this prolific mapper, and are complemented by one of his neatly annotated field maps, and an array of mapping tools and instruments that were used at the time for geological surveying.

The career of A. Gibb Maitland has been well celebrated and several accolades were awarded to him throughout his life. The Maitland family has kindly loaned the Mining Hall of Fame some of these awards to be displayed as part of this exhibition and afterwards in the inductees area of the complex. Maitland was awarded the Von Mueller medal for the advancement of science, the Kelvin medal of the Royal Society of Western Australia, and the King's Silver Jubilee Medal. He was also awarded the Clark Memorial Medal, but this has been lost over time.

The exhibition is completed by a set of enlarged black and white photos that reproduce the life in geological survey camps in the early part of the last century, and illustrate the variety of transport modes used by Survey geologists (Fig. 1)

The exhibition runs until 16 September 2007.

For further information on the exhibition contact  
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