

Richard Eustice from Cornwall to Australia

By Jim Eustice in Enfield, South Australia

Like many Cornish folk with a mining background, Richard Eustice, headed overseas. His father, William, died in 1851, a few months before he was born. This is mentioned several times in South Australian newspaper reports so his early life cannot have been easy.

While quite young he was a supervisor at a Cornish mine, was sent to South Australia to oversee some mining equipment being installed, stayed, married there, moved to another mining area within that State and was also asked to help with other mines interstate. He returned to the 'Old Country' on a fact-finding trip at one stage and was also joined in SA by other members of his family. On retiring, he initially moved to a suburb of Adelaide, capital of SA, then on to Sydney, NSW where he died.

Richard Eustice was born in Sept. 1851 near Hayle, in Cornwall, England. His parents were William (1810- April 10, 1851) and Jenefer Jane (WARD) (1814-1886).

For all the following information, I am heavily indebted to the South Australian newspapers, The Register, The Observer, and The Advertiser which can be accessed at the "Trove" section of the National Library of Australia.

Richard was apprenticed to a firm of engineers and patternmakers. At the age of 19 he had charge of the machinery at the Wheal Agar Mine in Cornwall. Then his employers in London, Messrs. Darlington sent him to watch the erection of plant for the Burra Burra Mine in South Australia.

While at Burra in 1876, he married Mary Louisa Colley, the eldest daughter of the late Rev. W. Colley who been the minister of the North Adelaide Primitive Methodist Church. The Rev. Colley was formerly of Hull, in Yorkshire.



After Kapunda, Burra is the earliest mining and industrial town to be established in Australia, copper was discovered in 1845. Australia's earliest mining structure is still in existence. Economically, Burra and Kapunda are significant in that their copper saved South Australia from a serious financial situation in the 1840s. During the 1870s, Richard Eustice was sent to watch the erection of plant for the Burra Burra Mine in South Australia by his employers in London, Messrs. Darlington. For further information on Burra mining see: www.south-australiahistory.com.au/burra.htm www.burrahistory.info.htm

In 1877 when copper was failing in Burra he went to the Moonta Mines. There he first worked as a patternmaker, afterwards supervised the surface plants, and subsequently was appointed surface officer at the Moonta Mines, 'which position he occupied with conspicuous ability'.

While still being employed at Moonta Mines he went in the mid-1890s to Broken Hill to overlook the erection of a concentrating plant, supervising the erection of apparatus for the treatment of sulphide ores for the South Mine. A couple of years later he was back there re-organising the concentrating methods and machinery, of the Block 14 and British Mines.

Unfortunately, in Jan. 1902, Richard's brother, Henry, 65 years of age, foreman carpenter at the Moonta Mine died suddenly while walking across the shop's yard. He was older than Richard, having been born in 1836. Henry left a widow and a young family of five daughters.

In April of 1907, Richard, with another member of the Moonta Mine staff left on board the Moldavia, from Port Adelaide, to visit Europe to examine mines Cornwall, Scotland, Ireland and possibly, Spain. They were going to be away for six months and during that time researching the latest developments in dealing with ores and in mining machinery and mining operations in general. On their way back they were stopping off in Western Australia to compare the results of their observations in the 'Old Country' with those occurring in that state.



Moonta, South Australia about 1880

Moonta in the 1870's was the largest town outside of Adelaide with some 12,000 people living in the area. There were about 80 businesses in the town including 5 hotels and 3 banks. Horse trams operated from East Moonta and Hamley Flat to Moonta Bay from 1869 to 1930. At its peak in the 1870's around 2000 men and boys were employed by the Company. Pickey boys were paid 11 pence per day for a 6 day week. 16 — 21 year olds averaged 3/- to 5/- per day and men over 21 averaged 5/- to 8/- per day. The miners were paid on a percentage of the value of the copper they dug out. Methodism was the main religion. Some 16 churches and chapels were built in the area. For further information on mining in the Copper Triangle of South Australia, where the towns of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina are, see: www.southaustraliahistory.com.au/moonta.htm

Richard was member of the American and Australian Institutes of Mining Engineers. Richard retired in 1911, from the various newspaper reports at that time of his send-off celebrations it appears he was extremely well thought of, not only for his work ethics, mining knowledge but also for his friendly and caring temperament. Initially he and his wife retired to Malvern, a suburb of Adelaide, then embarked on a world tour, visiting Canada, the USA, Britain, Europe, Fiji and New Zealand in the process travelling through France during WW I. They then moved to Chatswood in Sydney.

1915 saw the death of one of his sisters, Jenefer Jane Eustice. She had also been living in Moonta. In 1929, Richard and Mary, returned for a visit to Moonta and 'were greatly impressed by the warm welcome accorded by their old friends'. At time of this visit, he said the mines resembled "a graveyard with all the tombstones broken",

work having stopped there in 1923. Richard Eustice passed away at the age of 79 on October 3, 1930. Mary Louisa survived until July 6 1949 and the age of 92. The only relatives of theirs mentioned in the death notices are a nephew, Francis C Darby of Roseville, NSW and his children.



Richard Eustice went in the mid-1890s to Broken Hill to overlook the erection of a concentrating plant, supervising the erection of apparatus for the treatment of sulphide ores for the South Mine. A couple of years later he was back there re-organising the concentrating methods and machinery.