

MARK GARETH CREASY (G55-63)

The following is taken mainly from an article in the Autumn 1994 OF Magazine :-

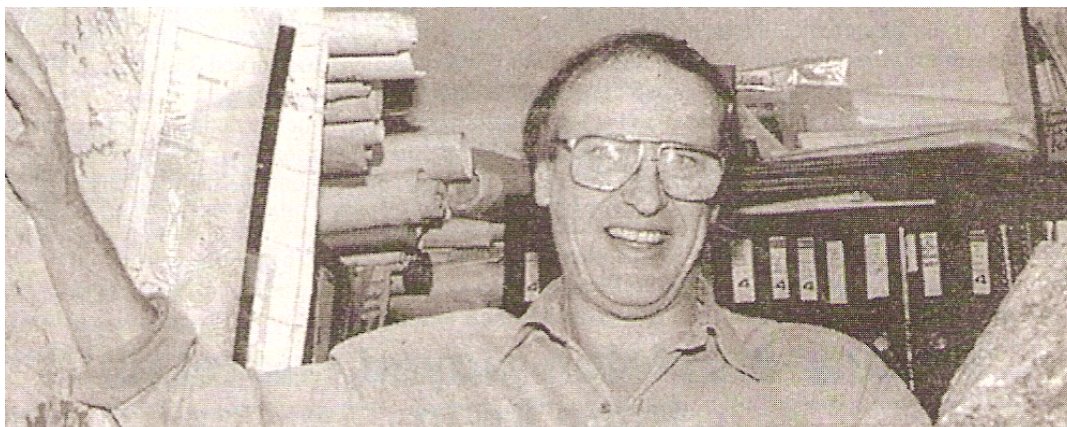
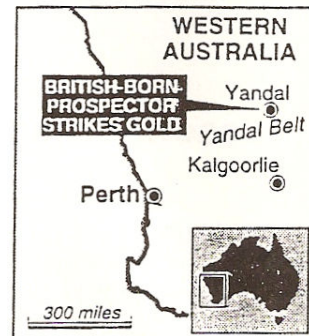
He was born on 4 October 1944.

After studying mining technology he went to Western Australia. He then spent 25 years prospecting with pick, shovel and pan in the Australian outback around Perth. In 1994 he struck it rich to the tune of £84m. That is what he is to be paid by Australian gold mining company for his title to mineral rights in an area in the Yandal Belt of Western Australia.

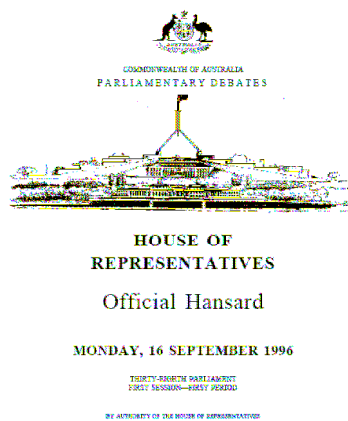
He wandered the outback in a battered 4 wheel drive vehicle and says that he will continue to prospect but in a much bigger way. "I always knew that one day I would find a major deposit worth a lot of money" he is reported from Australia as saying. He first observed the area where he hit pay dirt in 1976 and realised it was a potential gold-bearing area but it took him years to peg out the 1000 square km claim.

After the deal was done, Mark was quoted as saying "People think prospecting is a get rich quick scheme but really it is get poor scheme unless you are very fortunate. It is a very long and arduous process." For several years I was panning soil, bashing rocks and taking samples of gold from the area just like any normal prospector. My tools were a pan, shovel and hammer as I looked for nuggets but kept my eyes open for other things. I would make a bit of money, spend it, make some more and then I would be broke again."

His deal with Great Central Mines involves a payment of £3m immediately and the rest of the £84m as the company works the remote area, which had already yielded more than 3m ounces of gold.



The following page is taken from :-



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REPRESENTATIVES

4373

needed for the development of new mines. He understood that, if you ran down exploration, a time would come when there was no new development.

What has been happening in the goldmining industry is that because mining exploration has been largely brownfield sites it has proceeded, but that must come to an end. When we get into greenfield sites and we hit the inevitable barrier of native title, compounded by the lack of incentive due to the withdrawal of this tax exemption, we could get into a real problem with the industry—the industry which is today Australia's second biggest export and growing very rapidly. We need to be finding and identifying two million ounces every couple of months if we are going to sustain the industry at its present level.

Why did this come about? I think there are basically two reasons. The mining industry, in its usual gutless way, was desperate to hold off the diesel tax. The government had signalled that it was going to remove the diesel tax rebate. The Labor Party looked at this and decided that it would be crazy to do so. The Liberal Party had exactly the same evidence, but it had more. It had an Access Economics study, instituted by the industry, which demonstrated that it was clearly very foolish to do so. But the industry—so anxious to protect itself when it had every right to expect commonsense from the government—responded to Treasury's demand for trade-offs. The industry said, 'Take 23PA because that affects prospectors. It doesn't affect the large mining companies.' They were prepared to sacrifice prospectors, forgetting the long-term impact on the industry.

There was another factor. Mark Creasey, a prospector, had been spectacularly successful. It said in the papers that he had made a lot of money selling his leases to Mr Gutmick, who did extremely well with them. I think that a lot of credit should go to Mr Gutmick because, when the industry was sitting on its hands and frightened to move, Joe Gutmick was out there exploring and spending money looking for gold and other minerals. I believe that Mr Gutmick has been a tremendous asset to Australia in his determination, his courage and his success.

In my view, Mark Creasey is an Australian hero. What governments seem to forget is that for 25 years Mark Creasey had been out there searching for gold. He was broke. I would say he was literally on the bones of his arse. He was a man who had to worry about how he was going to afford a new tyre.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Quick)—Order! That is rather unparliamentary. I would ask you to withdraw that remark and rephrase it.

Mr CAMPBELL—I am happy to withdraw it. I had no idea it was unparliamentary. If it is, it should not be. I am happy to withdraw it. I think you get the message that he was very broke and that he was wondering where he was going to get the money for his new tyre. I think that after 25 years he enjoyed that success. It was not spontaneous; it was hard-earned. It was 25 years slugging it out in the bush. I think Australia owes him a great debt. In my view, he is a national hero and what he did was in the national interest.

Another area which is of some concern to me is the overkill with which the government acted against the community based child-care services. I am in the process of writing to the minister about this because it seems to me, for several reasons, that the country has been particularly disadvantaged. In mining areas there is a very heavy utilisation of these services. In mining areas people generally have no family support. There is no backup, so there is a greater need. While it is true that mining areas tend to have high wages, they also have very high costs. The net returns are often much lower than those that workers in the city enjoy.

Also, in the mining areas—in the name of competition, productivity or whatever—we have gone to 12-hour shifts. I was talking to one mining company recently which was a pioneer in seeking 12-hour shifts. They told me that, by the end of this year, they are hopeful that they can get the productivity of a 12-hour shift back to the level of an eight-hour shift. In many cases they would dearly like to move away from it, but they have locked themselves in. Workers now enjoy the lifestyle. It has played havoc with many country towns. Workers have simply bought