Headframes And Head-strong Miners

This steel headframe marks another more recent foray into reworking old mines. The mine below it was known as the 'Rose Hole' after Frank Rose who, with his mate Terry Horan, operated here in the 1960s. It is said to have been highly productive in those years, with yields of up to 8 oz/ton rewarding those who undertook the venture.

This recent good fortune contrasts strongly with the early reputation of the mine, then known as the Edwards. It and its neighbour, the Waratah, were said to have been *"in ill repute,"* with the Edwards in particular being *"the victim of circumstances"*. Strangely, these 'circumstances' are not explained and we are left wondering why this mine – floated in Adelaide with a capital of some $50,000 – could be sold at auction a year later for less than $300?

Despite its 'ill repute' the Edwards was fitted with a rudimentary headframe to enable ore to be hauled to the surface from the various drives below. These structures became more substantial – and more impressive – as mines were consolidated as long-term payable operations. In the early years timber was used, but by the 1930s steel had taken over as the material of choice.

Many of the early miners were determined and head-strong people, especially if they sniffed a means of making – or saving – money. Building a new headframe could be time consuming and costly, so buying one from an ailing mine and shifting it was seen to be a good option. In one remarkable case a headframe originally built for the Pollard Shaft at Youanmi (near Sandstone) was transported to the Campbell Shaft on the iron pyrites mine south of Norseman – and then transported again to the Elverdton Shaft at a copper mine south of Ravensthorpe!

The nearby United Scotchman Gold Mine utilised much more substantial headframes in 1897
Courtesy Phototone Colonial Library

Many headframes were small and rudimentary in the 1890s.
Courtesy Battye Library

The headframe before you had a far lesser distance to travel, having been fabricated in a backyard in Norseman in 1978 and then brought here and 'stood up'. It may not be massive or particularly elegant, but it served its purpose well, bringing good gold-bearing ore up from underground for those who had built it.

Brockwayii
WALK TRAIL
Distance 760m return
Features: Eucalyptus Torquata,
Quandongs, Currant Bush
CAUTION
Stay away from mine workings
Seat located at halfway point
Shire of Dundas

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