

# Wundowie, WA

## Site History

**1943** Funds were provided and approval given to establish a blast furnace and wood distillation plant in the South West, adjacent to port facilities and extensive forest areas. The government then decided to build a small experimental plant at Wundowie.

The reason Wundowie was chosen was the abundance of natural resources in the area - being on the main railway line, close proximity to the city, extensive low grade forest areas, the Kalgoorlie pipeline was close by, local iron ore deposits, and limestone and magnesite ore were all obtainable from various sources in WA.

**1943** Building of the charcoal, iron and steel plant commenced.

**1946** Three staff houses were erected and one was then occupied by the first Manager of Works, Mr Harris.

**1947** The building of the town commenced and the State Housing Commission undertook this proposition and erected 40 houses. By the end of 1947 construction of the plant was finally completed.

**1948 (January)** (4 years after commencement) Wundowie Charcoal Iron and Steel started production and supply of pig iron to meet the needs of local foundries. It was officially opened on 15 April 1948 by Mr Hawke, the Minister of Industrial Development in Western Australia.

**1955** After demonstrating profitable returns to the Government and high demands from overseas countries, a second (larger) blast furnace was approved and also the construction of a new charcoal producing plant undertaken. A Belgium designed Lambiotte retort was finally built and still stands on the site today. Employment at this time exceeded 400 persons and the population of Wundowie grew to more than 1,000.

Wundowie Foundry grew from humble beginnings as a small facility set up alongside the blast furnaces and producing castings for use mainly in the Charcoal Iron & steel operation. By **1965** the foundry was producing castings for agricultural equipment.

**1966** The foundry was purchased by ANI (Aust.) Pty Ltd by agreement with the government to expand the foundry over a 5year period. After only 3 years the foundry was passed back to the government.

**1974** State-of-the-art Disamatic moulding machine was installed in the foundry targeted at the production of products for the rapidly growing mining industry.

**1975** Agnew Clough Ltd purchased the newly named Wundowie Iron and Steel operation from the government.

**1981** Saw the cessation of pig iron production and the retention of the foundry.

**1982** Recession forces the foundry to diversify into new product lines such as stoves, tillage points and barbecue hardware.

**1988** Wundowie Foundry is the only entity to continue operations on the site.

**1989** The foundry operation is purchased by the Clough Group. Wundowie Foundry Pty Ltd is born as a stand alone entity. Bill Pearce is appointed the inaugural Managing Director.

**1991** New melting furnaces installed to allow the production of steel castings. The Foundry attains international quality accreditation status.

**1994** Purchase of a Mk. 4 Disa and auxiliary equipment forms part of a significant upgrade of the foundry involving a \$ 6.0 million investment by the Clough Group.

**2002** Foundry moves into world class computer simulation of complex castings techniques as part of its extensive Research and Development programme. Total Process Management (TPM) program implemented.

**2003** Wundowie Foundry Pty Ltd was purchased by a partnership, Mr. Bill Pearce and Mr. Richard Reid.

Wundowie Foundry Pty Ltd was the supplier of 'Wundowie' cast wear liner parts to mining industry. Through high technology and design Wundowie Foundry successfully exported ground engaging castings such as adaptors and teeth for earth moving equipment in large overseas mining operations to Indonesia.

Wundowie Foundry became one of the leading foundries in WA, employing around 80 permanent people.

**2006** Mr. Bill Pearce retires on the 14th November 2006 after 29 years of service at Wundowie Foundry. This announcement coincided with the sale of Wundowie Foundry Pty Ltd to Bradken Resources Pty Ltd.

The Wundowie acquisition has been a complimentary addition to Bradken and has provided Bradken with its first Disamatic Moulding operation/machine.