



## **National Trust of Australia (Victoria)**

### **Bendigo and Region Branch**

## **November 2020 Newsletter**

### **Bendigo & Region Branch Meetings & Events Postponed Until Further Notice**

#### **Some words from the Branch President**

##### ***Dear Members and supporters***

While there may have been no recent Branch meetings the committee has been working on a range of issues and making submissions on planning applications and heritage studies and looking to the future to preserve the region's heritage and history. The committee has decided to conduct the Branch's AGM in February 2021 which is normally held in November of each year.

In this newsletter Assoc. Prof. Lindsay Jackson, speaking on behalf of the Friends of Bendigo School of Mines, puts forward some suggestions for the future use of the soon to be vacant Mechanic's Institute and Free Library located in McCrae St Bendigo and is currently part of the TAFE complex. He has contributed his view to stimulate what might be possible for the future and to encourage others to also raise ideas. The Branch asks you to consider what is possible and to forward your ideas so that it can play a part in formulating a Plan with TAFE, the State Government, Greater Bendigo City Council and other organisations to make sure that this magnificent building can be rejuvenated into a vibrant community facility of culture, history and heritage.

The discussion is timely as the Bendigo Historical Society has been evicted from Specimen Cottage because of construction works for the new Law Courts to 2023. The Society has also been told that they have to find a new home for their research activities and their 40,000 items in their historical artefacts collection which is located at the Bendigo Regional Archive Centre in Nolan Street. It is the fourth time the Society has been told to move since 1999. Organisations interested in preserving historic artefacts need to support the Society in their time of need.

Enjoy the read and some feedback on issues will be most appreciated.

***Peter Cox, President, 0447473674***

### **Specimen Cottage faces uncertainty**

Specimen Cottage is facing an uncertain future due to the construction of the new Bendigo Law Courts. The Bendigo Historical Society has recently been told to exit the building while construction takes place of the Law Courts. The Branch has made a submission to Heritage Victoria who is considering planning application details for the Law Courts. See below an excerpt from the submission.



Specimen Cottage is now closed and stands as part of a construction site.

#### **The Branch's submission says**

"It is important that the long term restoration of Specimen Cottage is achieved through this application and a program of works is agreed upon by Heritage Victoria and Court Services Victoria (CSV) as the construction of the new courts provides an ideal opportunity to undertake works to Specimen Cottage which will ensure its integrity going forward in the coming centuries.

The building which first started as a single storey dwelling in 1856 and added to in 1861 is recognised as being historically significant as an intact example of an early artisan's house on the goldfields. It is known as Bendigo's oldest known house.

The recent decision to increase the site's curtilage is a positive step forward. The overhang of the new court building affecting the site now needs to be considered. The Branch sees the bulk of the proposed new building is an over development of the site but acknowledges the limitations imposed in designing a building of architectural merit and at the same time providing the necessary space for the required services. Taking into account that another floor would be required if the overhanging did not occur and that CSV has agreed to undertake works to Specimen Cottage, it appears to be a reasonable outcome for all parties. The works need to be undertaken in the context of a Conservation Management Plan with costings and a timetable clearly stated in the plan.

In the information provided by the applicant an inspection and condition report is to be written on Specimen Cottage. This is due to take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> October. Once compiled this report needs to be circulated to submitters for comment. It is known that there is poor drainage around the site, rising damp in the building and that inadequate past maintenance has contributed to the building's poor state of repair. It would seem prudent at this time to carry out the necessary drainage works around the building while the construction of the court building is taking place.

The entrance to the courts is located close to Specimen Cottage which will impact with much foot traffic where the public gathers before court hearings. It will be important to protect the walls of the building by means of discreet fencing, landscaping and seating. Over many years the crowds congregating before court cases has become a familiar scene in country towns. They prefer to be outside rather than in the building itself.

Security is also another issue to be addressed to discourage vandalism and indiscreet behaviour not only when courts are in operation but at all times particularly at night. It is noted that the public will have access to all walls of the cottage unlike its current status.

Specimen Cottage has experienced a lack of maintenance over the years. While TAFE had an educational interest in the building in the past, it has now taken a different path with its educational development and the building seems surplus to its needs. It would be more appropriate that the custodianship be held with the Greater Bendigo City Council on behalf of its citizens once the repair works are completed. In the interests of preserving this important Bendigo historical icon, Heritage Victoria is encouraged to comment on a long term management plan for the site so that costly works completed now will positively influence its future.

Specimen Cottage today has a very practical use being tenanted by the Bendigo Historical Society but Bendigo TAFE has custodianship and Greater Bendigo City Council its administration.

### **Ravenswood Shepherd's Huts**

After complaints last Year the Branch made a request to the Department of Lands Water & Planning to repair a series of stone buildings on Public Land at Ravenswood. As a result a roof has been replaced on one of the buildings and a meeting was held which resulted in discussion about a possible new management committee being formed to protect the buildings. COVID-19 has prevented the committee being formed but it is hoped discussions will again commence. The stone buildings are in poor condition and urgently need some tender loving care. Rhett and I visited the site last week and experienced the wonderful



countryside, the magnificent old trees and the historic stone buildings. The Branch is seeking assistance from members and supporters who might consider going on a management committee on behalf of the National Trust. This might be the last opportunity to save these treasures from the past.



The new roof on one of the buildings.

## **Draft Paper to consider Possibilities for Future Uses for Building A - McCrae Street TAFE Campus**

### **Synopsis**

Opportunities to revamp the old School of Mines buildings (Building A) on McCrae Street must be seized. This paper attempts to highlight some of the possibilities available to revitalize these beautiful heritage buildings such that they can be better appreciated and utilized by locals and visitors alike.

This report needs to be considered in the context of:

- (a) *Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020 – 2030*<sup>1</sup> and
- (b) *Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing*<sup>2</sup>

The possibility of receiving funding to refurbish part of the old building on McCrae Street – Building A is considered. This Building actually comprises two separate parts, the original Mechanics Institute and Free Library of two storeys (1862 – 1878) which includes the famous Octagonal Library (1887) and the three storied building to the west with tower (1889 - 1890). The complete building complex with its wonderful streetscape eventually became the Bendigo School of Mines and Industries.



Bendigo Mechanics Institute and Free Library

This Paper is to support the case being made for some Government funded refurbishment, bearing in mind that such funding will only be available if future viability is proven.

The following points can be made towards establishing some viable suggestions.

- (i) The ground floor **Restaurant 1887** (ground floor of the octagonal library) needs to be fully operational, providing good food service and be well publicised. The best publicity may be via establishing relationships with organisations in Bendigo and district, which logically relate to the buildings and, in particular, the future contents and purposes as spelt out below. It is envisaged that various historical groups, interest groups, and clubs, would hold meetings accompanied with a lunch/dinner. Although opening to the public, probably on a restricted basis, a return to a previously successful model of catering to groups for their special occasions is recommended.

Previous examples of such functions include Friends of the School of Mines lunches and dinners and the weekly meetings of the Rotary Club of Bendigo – Sandhurst.

Apart from the various service clubs such as Rotary Clubs; The National Trust, Bendigo Historical Society, Literature groups, University groups and student groups could be attracted to this venue. With a high culinary standard, wine and food groups, and gourmet clubs may be attracted. This concept is not fanciful, The Emily McPherson College and more recently the William Angliss School have provided high class catering on-site at RMIT for many years. The concept of a

culinary school providing very attractive meals for eager, paying guests is well established in Europe.

- (ii) The historical setting for Restaurant 1887 in the unique octagonal library needs to be emphasized. It is a setting probably unique in Australia and should be a key factor in the marketing of the complex.
- (iii) The *Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020 – 2030*<sup>1</sup> is a document that may well determine the future for many local food growing, processing, and in particular culinary activities. By integrating the future development of Restaurant 1887 with this strategy, a unique, popular offering may be developed.
- (iv) The history of Bendigo is full of great technical achievements and many of these are spelt out in the book – *"Bendigo at Work - An Industrial History"* by Mike Butcher and Yolande M J Collins<sup>3</sup>. This wonderful book captures our incredible industrial history. Based on this literary work and the authors experience, the possible future **Contents and Purposes** for an Industrial Museum are now detailed. My description of possible spaces in a museum complex is certainly not exhaustive and will be coloured by my own experience. Generally the spaces envisaged are based on themes. In the main I have tried to steer clear of duplicating what already exists in Australia, although pop-up displays should be organized, often co-operatively, as appropriate.



The dome roof in Restaurant 1887

## Contents and Purposes for Museum Activities in Building A

### **The teaching of Mining Engineering, Primary Metallurgy and Assaying**

Although the Cornish miners brought great skills as hard rock miners, it was geological knowledge, mining engineering, entrepreneurial foundries and engineering works that enabled the gold resources to be exploited and an extraordinary amount of gold to be extracted.

What is perhaps extraordinary is that the advances in geological exploration and surveying earlier established in Bendigo, along with modern gold extractive metallurgy, continues to this day (e.g. Kirkland Lake Gold mining at Fosterville).

Thus a well-curated collection of artefacts pertaining to the teaching in these areas is envisaged. When Thompsons Foundry at Castlemaine changed roles/ownership to become a pump manufacturer under the name of Kelly and Lewis much of the original equipment and most of the original drawing office was saved by the engineering museum at Maldon. Important drawings and blueprints are stored at this site. The Bendigo Museum as envisaged should not clash with the Maldon offering since it would emphasize the technology and the teaching – wholly sympathetic to the history of the McCrae Street site.

Although additional historical research into the teaching of the Primary Metallurgy and Inorganic Chemistry subjects, particularly the laboratory work will be required, there is still a great amount of personal knowledge existing (do not wait another 10 years to interview these experts!). The same applies to assaying, mine surveying and similar technical areas that were taught in the Metallurgy, Chemistry and Civil Engineering courses. e.g. what was considered as basic at the time – Laboratory work, the use of a Slide Rule, graphics, solid geometry, etc.

Whilst discussing the technology of mining, the ancillary areas of **Fuse and Explosives Manufacture** and Bendigo **Foundries and Engineering Works**, may be added; see the main Reference, *Bendigo at Work* pages 55 and 33.

Under this heading of **Contents and Purposes**, the following additional areas need to be considered as possibly deserving of a place.

**The History of Textiles in Greater Bendigo.** The long history of knitting mills and the like is well described in *Bendigo at Work*, page 191. The recent curated display at the Bendigo Library of products from the 'Hanro' factory was a great example of a pop-up display.

The section on **Bendigo Sewing Machines** in *Bendigo at Work* page 251, may be seen as complimentary.

Perhaps the sections **Brewing** and **Viticulture and Winemaking** pages 137 and 209 respectively in *Bendigo at Work* could be brought together for a special exhibition.

**Art and Pottery Education**, so important in Bendigo deserves special consideration. With Dennis O'Hoy and James Lerk leading the way and in co-operation with the Bendigo Art Gallery, the rich historical contributions made on this campus could be expertly recognised. See also page 95 of *Bendigo at Work*.

Another major example pertains to **Architecture, Building Construction and Cast Iron Decoration**. This area could well come under the heading of William Charles Vahland – the key architect in Bendigo - perhaps a special room, the **Vahland Room** could be set up. With Mike Butcher, a world authority on Vahland living here in Bendigo, we have a unique opportunity to display many example of Vahlands work and combine it with examples of decorative cast iron – a world-renowned collection resides in Bendigo.

Experts in these fields may deem it necessary to also recognise the work of William Beebe, Otto Waschatz and others.

There are other examples from our industrial past where education and training at the McCrae Street campus played a crucial role and these will need further research.

Four final comments are necessary –

- (a) Any collection of artefacts in a future Building A Museum, may not be in the form of a permanent public display. The keys to storing valuable historical items are security and safety, cataloguing and the ability to display when required. In this regard the skills of a highly experienced museum's curator.
- (b) The public display of the historical items would most likely occur on an occasional basis – i.e. as a pop-up. If the display can be synchronised with a special event, e.g. a conference, special dinner, etc. this would represent a plus for Bendigo. The plans for Specimen cottage as formulated by the Bendigo Historical society may need to be integrated into this discussion.  
Pop – Up displays have been successfully utilized in Bendigo in the past; examples being the many curated at the Post Office Gallery, and the fantastic special events at the Art Gallery such as “The Marilyn Monroe” (hardly a pop-up!)
- (c) The Bendigo Historical Society has very extensive historical collections – both at BRAC and at Specimen Cottage. Any discussion concerning the storage and display of artefacts would need to occur in close consultation with this group so that the best outcomes are attained.
- (d) With the State Government recently announcing a grant of \$50,000 toward the Goldfields Region bid for UNESCO World Heritage listing<sup>4</sup>, it is inconceivable that Bendigo does not yet have a museum to enable the collection and display of the very industrial artefacts that made deep mining so technically advanced and successful. The very technology that enabled Bendigo and indeed Melbourne to become so wealthy in the latter part of the nineteenth century!

### **Conclusions**

This report attempts to uncover possibilities for future uses for Building A. It is in the form of a draft as additional contributions, amendments and improvements may be necessary. If indeed funds are forthcoming, let us grasp the opportunities, be bold in our imagination and work with a unified zeal to achieve a result that Bendigo can be proud of!

### **References**

1. *Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020 - 2030* - Web Site
2. *Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Listing* – Web Site
3. “*Bendigo at Work – An industrial History*” by Mike Butcher and Yolande M K Collins. Holland House Publishing, 2005
4. *Goldfields Region bid for UNESCO World Heritage listing* – The Courier Ballarat July3, 2020

Assoc. Prof. Lindsay N Jackson  
For Friends of the Bendigo School of Mines,  
Bendigo Sept, 2020

**The Branch is keen to hear your views on Lindsay's proposal and as he says it's only a start to the conversation on housing Greater Bendigo's historical story.**

“Bendigo at Work” can be purchased from the Branch at a cost of \$40 with free delivery in Bendigo. It makes a wonderful present.



### **Now there are three proposed multi storey hotels.**

A third multi storey hotel (pictured below) is planned for the east corner of Williamson & Mollison Streets Bendigo but has not yet been approved. A number of historic buildings may be demolished if the proposal proceeds. Two other hotel proposals, one in the Hargreaves Mall on the Beehive site and another on the west corner of Mollison & Williamson Streets, known as the former Bush's Store, have been approved by Heritage Victoria. There is also the GovHub development opposite the Town Hall and the new Law Courts on the TAFE site on the corner of Mundy & Hargreaves Streets. All of these developments will have an impact on the City's heritage streetscape.



### **Progress towards World Heritage Recognition of the Central Victorian Goldfields Region.**

The City of Greater Bendigo and the City of Ballarat have been jointly leading a bid for World Heritage recognition of the central Victorian Goldfields region on behalf of 13 municipalities (Ballarat, Greater Bendigo, Ararat, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Moorabool, Mount Alexander, Northern Grampians and Pyrenees). The region comprises nearly 20% of the state's land area and has a population of about 500,000 people. The idea for World Heritage recognition of the central Victorian goldfields has been around for over 30 years. Serious efforts commenced about a decade ago to place the Castlemaine Diggings National Heritage Park on the World Heritage List resulting in a failed bid by the Victorian Government. The Australian Government did not support the application being forwarded to UNESCO.



Monster Meeting of Miners, Castlemaine

The process is that the relevant State submits an application to the Australian Government who then submits an application to UNESCO. The general observation can be made that the Australian Government will only support applications that they believe will be successful in obtaining World Heritage listing. In early 2019 the concept was relaunched with the cities of Greater Bendigo and Ballarat joining forces to take the lead with strong support from the other eleven municipalities. A completely different approach has now been used based on what is termed a serial listing of a small number of sites across the region that represent the key attributes that contribute to world heritage. This approach uses as a model the successful Cornwall – West Devon tin mining application for World Heritage listing which was based on a dozen sites and a regional development regeneration theme. The overall approach is to pitch the proposal as being highly supportive of regional regeneration and targeting the initiative as very supportive of a post COVID-19 recovery plan.

With strong support and funding from the 13 municipalities, substantial in-kind support and funding from the cities of Ballarat and Greater Bendigo, funding from the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive, Regional Development Australia Loddon Mallee and from Regional Development Victoria, the bid now has strong momentum.

There is now a clear road map that sets out a process and the likely timeline through to the middle of 2025 which would follow the sequence of:

1. Victorian Government submits an application to the Australian Government for what is known as a tentative listing;
2. Australian Government determines whether to support the application and if it does puts forward a nomination to UNESCO;
3. UNESCO makes a decision.

**From Greater Bendigo City Council** (more information in the minutes of Council meeting held 21<sup>st</sup> Oct/[www.bendigo.vic.gov.au](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au))

### **Letter from James Lerk (in response for requests for his book; Bendigo's once Flourishing Tomato Industry)**

I am most impressed by the work that the Nat Trust branch is doing particularly in relation to the many higher rise developments proposed for the city along with the challenge in retaining character and scale. Please encourage all to keep up the pressure and to stimulate greater awareness of the importance of heritage including that of buildings from more recent times!

Yes I did another run of my tomato book and there is still one box left, the printer discovered ten unbound copies of the book, "Gold , Blood, Sweat and Fear, Bendigo's Diamond Hill and its Gullies" these have been covered and are available from myself at \$50 each, they were in high demand at the time of the launch back in 2016, a weighty tome at 252 pages. Both volumes are available from me at [jamesalerk@gmail.com](mailto:jamesalerk@gmail.com) or leave a message on my phones 03 54431717 or 0412 374 842, thanks so much for raising the question. Whenever, I get the opportunity, I am always keen to promote the various titles that you folks have available.

Thanks and best regards

James

## **From our Maldon members- Have your say on the Maldon Streetscape!**

Hello

The Maldon Streetscape Revitalisation Project is has been progressing over recent months. This project has now reached an exciting point and your input is being sought. The question is - **what makes Maldon special to you?**

In particular, the question relates to our central area public spaces. These spaces are part of Maldon's historic streetscape and are of heritage significance, but they have not been studied or assessed in their own right in the past. Council has contracted an independent heritage consultant to undertake this work.

This opportunity has arisen in response to concerns raised by the community regarding the potential for the Streetscape works as proposed in the Concept Design released earlier this year to adversely impact on Maldon's heritage significance.

More information is available in the attached flyer and on Council's website here - <https://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/HaveYourSay>

There are several ways you can have input to the Community Consultation process:

- fill out a 'postcard' - these are available from several businesses around town
- use the interactive map via the link on Council's HaveYourSay web page to record comments and photos
- email your comments and photos to [maldonstreetscape@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:maldonstreetscape@mountalexander.vic.gov.au)
- or even send a snail mail.

**All feedback is due by Monday 16 November 2020.**

Please feel free to email me with any queries about the project, and please share this email with others you think may be interested.

Thank you for your time and do take the opportunity to have your say.

Jan Warracke

Community Member, Streetscape Project Steering Committee and Working Groups





## Have your say

Mount Alexander Shire Council is undertaking a heritage assessment of the public spaces within the Maldon town centre (High and Main streets) to help inform the Maldon Streetscape Revitalisation Project.

We know Maldon's historic streetscapes are significant, and are special for many people. We'd like to hear how they are important to you.

Is there a place, object, tree, view, vista or quality within the town centre which is special or valuable to you?

Do you have memories of Old Bank Corner or ideas on how it could be used?

Your thoughts, memories and knowledge are important to this project.

Reply paid postcards are located in a number of businesses in Maldon including the newsagent, pharmacy, supermarket, bakery, bank, Post Office, Visitor Information Centre and Maldon Neighbourhood Centre.

If you have more to say please submit your comments via Council's website at [www.mountalexandervic.gov.au/HaveYourSay](http://www.mountalexandervic.gov.au/HaveYourSay) or email [maldonstreetscape@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:maldonstreetscape@mountalexander.vic.gov.au).

We are accepting submissions until Monday 16 November.





## Good News- White Hills Cemetery Fence Restoration



The fence today after restoration works and repainting.



Before



After

Remembrance Parks Central Victoria, in conjunction with Minerva Heritage, applied for and received a Living Heritage Grant through Heritage Victoria to undertake urgent repairs to the State Heritage registered gates and fence designed by W. C. Vahland at the White Hills Cemetery. Vahland designed the fence in 1882 and research conducted in preparation of the application found the original specifications for the project, including the original colour. A buildup of earth inside the fence, and the effect of undermining by the roots of nearby Pepper Trees, had caused the straight sections of the fence to lean precariously towards the road. This displacement had caused a significant number of the cast iron elements of the fence to break and some to be lost. It had also become so concerning that a stone corner column was removed and stored off site for safety reasons.

The design and construction of the fence was such that each of the straight sections were effectively one piece making the straightening and leveling process quite difficult without causing further damage. Gary Hill from Minerva Heritage worked with Shane Muir from Shane Muir Consulting Engineers to devise a repair method that met all building regulations without dismantling any of the original fence or causing undue stress to the Pepper trees. Examples of broken and missing cast iron elements were obtained and sent to Billman's Foundry at Castlemaine, who reproduced parts that were then welded back onto the fence by Bendigo Metalworks to replace missing elements.

I. G. Parker Heritage Restorations from Lilydale carried out the removal of excess material from behind the fence, its re-alignment on strengthened foundations and construction of a low retaining wall between it and the trees. When finished the fence and gates were painted by Nathan Gundrall in Bronze Green as required in Vahland's original specifications. An arborist checked the health of the trees near the fence and carried out remediation where necessary, and new pepper trees were planted along the length of the Holdsworth Road boundary. Credit should also be given to long time NT member Carol Holdsworth whose efforts were instrumental in gaining State Heritage listing for the White Hills Cemetery.

### **Paint Controls Being Ignored**



We all get excited about teams we support but it need not be to the detriment of heritage buildings. The Axedale Hotel has been given a makeover for the AFL Grand Final. The integrity of the building has been compromised and it is hoped that it will be returned to its heritage colour.

**Please Contribute to the Branch's Newsletter !**

We welcome your ideas, contributions and images to the Newsletter. Please let us know of your concerns on heritage issues. We would really welcome "Letters to the Editor". And keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate Blog at

<http://www.trustadvocate.org.au/>

National Trust of Australia (VIC) Bendigo & Region Branch

PO Box 123, California Gully, VIC 3556

Phone President, Peter Cox 0447 473 674 Email [natrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:natrustbendigo@gmail.com)

**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past, present and future.**

You are receiving this email because you are a member of the National Trust of Australia (Vic) or have asked us to send you our newsletters. If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please contact the Bendigo Branch at [natrustbendigo@gmail.com](mailto:natrustbendigo@gmail.com) with Unsubscribe in the subject line.