



National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Bendigo and Region Branch

February 2021 Newsletter

Bendigo & Region Branch Meetings & Events Postponed Until Further Notice

Some words from the Branch President

Dear Members and supporters

Welcome to 2021 National Trust activities and a newsletter that explains some heritage issues that you might like to be involved in.

Meetings are still difficult to organise but it what happens outside of meetings that is important. The Branch committee is working on a number of issues and invites you to submit comment and if you have some time to undertake some research to enhance action on heritage preservation it would be very much appreciated. These are some of the issues-

- Bendigo Mechanics Institute & Free Library, McCrae St Bendigo. TAFE has decided to make this building obsolete to its needs. It was due to be vacated in 2023 but with new buildings coming on stream it will be vacated by TAFE this year. It is in need of a repurpose/refurbishment. It is intended to form a community wide group to promote its reuse and work with TAFE, Council and the State Government to bring it back to life. Would you like to join such a group?
- Securing the Dr E Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection for exhibition and use in Bendigo.
- Compiling a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on the Victorian planning framework in relation to planning and heritage protection.(including other issues)

- Following up on the protection of a stone culvert/bridge at Spring Gully, preservation of stone buildings at Ravenswood, the protection of an Observatory at Kennington and the preservation of Specimen Cottage.
- Campaign to stop residential buildings being taken over for business around the Bendigo CBD.
- There is currently a discussion of revitalising the historic Victoria Hill Mining Site and surrounds and the Branch will need to contribute with ideas.
- Assistance with compiling a regular newsletter and updating the Branch's skills to broadcast its meetings throughout the region.



Victoria Hill

Volunteers Needed!

Issues arise weekly and often need urgent action. If you can contribute some time to work on these issues please get in touch. Perhaps you have other issues that you would like to see taken up.

You do not need to be a member of the National Trust but have an interest in heritage and history. Have a think about it and contact me to discuss how you might contribute. Students studying planning and heritage could also make their studies more relevant by doing an assignment on a heritage site that is at risk. Others who live in Kyneton, Maldon, Castlemaine and other rural areas could write short articles.

The Branch's AGM will be held once Covid restrictions are lifted. Please pass on the newsletter to other who might be interested.

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

On behalf of the Branch Committee

Peter Cox, President, 0447473674



Meeting with the Mayor

Representatives recently met with the Mayor, Cr Jen Alden, to discuss a number of issues which include-

- **Specimen Cottage.** Currently the TAFE College is the custodian of Specimen Cottage. It is leased by the Council who in turn lease it to the Bendigo Historical Society. It is currently vacant due to the construction of the new Court House Complex. It is known as Bendigo's first built house that still survives today. The Branch is advocating that the custodianship could be the responsibility of the Council on behalf of the people of Greater Bendigo. Court Services Victoria who is constructing the new court house has agreed to undertake a Conservation Management Plan and works for the site. Once this is completed a long term management plan and ownership principles need to be put in place.
- **Bendigo Mechanics Institute & Free Library.** The Pall Mall/McCrae St Precinct is in need of a long term plan. The above building is due to become vacant this year as the TAFE College has decided that it is obsolete to their needs. Once the new court house is completed the former Post Office and the existing Court House will also become underutilised or vacant. The community and the Council in partnership with the State Government need to develop the Plan. Bendigo and Victoria are at a stage of its development that it can sustain a new cultural experience in this precinct. What is it to be and who will lead it?
- **The Dr E. Graeme Robertson Cast Iron Collection.** This Collection, owned by the National Trust and in the custody of Council, is in need of a home. The Branch is in a position to manage it. It requested the Mayor to consider locating it to the Bendigo Gas Works site.



Pall Mall and McCrae St. Potential untapped?

Some Good News on Pike's Corner

People in Bendigo have been saying for years 'get rid of the Treloars Jewellers hoarding' on the corner of Mitchell St and Pall Mall and finally it looks like it might happen. The buildings were sold last year and the new owners intend to restore the site. It's a large prominent site which needs activating. The Branch wishes the new owners every success in their venture.

Darren Wright has provided some pictures and some information about John Pike who purchased the site in 1854. Read his article below.



JOHN PIKE (1814-1889)

John Pike was born in England in 1814. Later he married Elizabeth Vinters to which was born his first daughter, Eliza. Travelling to Australia in 1841, they came to Victoria and were settled at Western Port by about 1848, later coming to Bendigo in the early 1850's. John Pike purchased land at the first of the land sales in 1854, apparently purchasing an immense amount of land with one of the more notable being one parcel notably being situated at the corner of Pall Mall and Mitchell Streets, from the Beehive Stores along Pall Mall and up Mitchell-street to Mr. J. R. Hoskin's timber yard, which was vacant at the time and bearing only a timber post and rail fence on the perimeter. This was later to be referred to as "Pike's Corner" and became some of the most valuable property in the city centre. Land was also purchased on the site presently occupied by the Alexandra Fountain with a substantial weatherboard structure built bearing a timber shingled roof. This was later utilised as the first Bendigo Post Office prior to much more substantial premises being erected in View Street a

number of years later. It is stated that for a time he kept the first Post Office opened on the goldfield.

The first building on "Pike's Corner" was a very simple single-storey timber construction which later gave way to a double storey building comprising a number of tenanted shops which Pike retained up until his death and which still stand today. Presumably John Pike's eldest daughter, Eliza, inherited this property for it is stated that it was bequeathed to the Bendigo Hospital upon her death in 1905.

DEATH OF ANOTHER OLD BENDIGONIAN.

From an obituary in the Bendigo Advertiser, Thursday 7th November, 1889. Page 2.

Yesterday Mr. John Pike, at his residence, Toorak-road, South Yarra, passed away to the unseen world after a short illness. Notwithstanding his ripe old age, namely, 75 years, Mr. Pike usually enjoyed excellent health, and paid a visit to Sandhurst as recently as three weeks ago.

About eight or ten days ago, however, he was seized with an attack of diarrhoea, which grew in severity, and medical skill being of no avail the patient succumbed to the disease as previously mentioned. The news of his death was received by his many friends in Sandhurst with very great regret, more especially by his tenants, a number of whom have rented properties from him in Sandhurst for as long as twenty years, and some for over a quarter of a century. Amongst these are Messrs. C. Woods, D. Whyte, John Emery, and John Robshaw. The whole of his tenants speak of Mr. Pike as a just, honorable, and generous landlord. Many stories are told of his generosity towards, and consideration shown, to his tenants.

The deceased gentleman was a very old colonist, having arrived in Victoria in the "forties." He came to Bendigo in the early days of the diggings and it is stated that for a time he kept the first post office opened on the goldfield. Mr. Pike acquired an immense amount of property of great value in Sandhurst, Melbourne, and other places, and retained it up to the time of his death. He owned that valuable property known as Pike's Buildings, extending from the Beehive Stores along Pall Mall and up Mitchell-street to Mr. J. R. Hoskin's timber yard. He was also possessed of a large station at Mansfield, in the North-eastern district, and another in the Korong Vale district. Mr. Pike never took a prominent part in public matters, being of a rather retiring disposition. He leaves a numerous family, all grown up. The funeral, we understand, will take place in Melbourne to-morrow.



Postcard from 1935 showing Pike's Corner

Your chance to win \$10,000 in Gold Bullion!



The National Trust Summer Raffle has some fabulous prizes! 46 of them!

The raffle closes on 25th February 2021, and is drawn on the 26th.

Explore, Discover, Enjoy!

Now is the time to re-discover Victoria, and we've got just the ticket...

This summer you have the chance to win one of over 45 amazing prizes from a prize pool valued at a total of \$25,000.

Explore and enjoy what Victoria has to offer.

By purchasing tickets, you will be helping to raise funds for the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) so we can continue to offer you amazing places, activities and advocacy.

Enter now to win great prizes.

Tickets are priced at \$5 each, 5 tickets for \$10, 10 tickets for \$20, 30 tickets for \$60, 50 tickets for \$100, and can be purchased on line at

<https://www.rafflelink.com.au/nattrustraffle>



or by the QR code

Legislative Council call for an Inquiry on the adequacy of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the Victorian planning framework in relation to planning and heritage protection successful.

On 28 October, Sustainable Australia MP Clifford Hayes MP successfully introduced the motion.

The motion was supported by the Opposition and crossbenchers including Dr Samantha Ratnam, leader of the Victorian Greens. In his speech Mr Hayes highlighted a number of heritage places lost to development in recent years, including the 1966 [Breedon House](#) by Geoffrey Woodfall which was demolished while being assessed for its heritage significance, a modernist gem by Chancellor & Patrick at [27 Mariemont Avenue in Beaumaris](#), and Toorak mansion Idylwilde, which was demolished in 2015, with the site now remaining vacant.

Hayes also called out the inadequacy of penalties for the illegal demolition of heritage places, citing the developers of the Corkman Irish Pub, who had [their fines cut on appeal](#), and are currently [facing legal action](#) for failing to deliver on state and local government requirements to turn the site into a public park.

He also cited continuing advocacy by the National Trust to strengthen heritage protections and recognise the important role of heritage in connecting people and place, contributing to vibrant communities.

Dr Samantha Ratnam, leader of the Victorian Greens, contributed to the Terms of Reference, and noted the need to consider environmental protections and the protection of vegetation, in the context of climate change, and the impacts of the “urban heat island” effect arising from the loss of canopy trees and green space.

The Inquiry will investigate a range of aspects of the Victorian planning system, including: – The high cost of housing; – Environmental sustainability and vegetation protection. – Delivering certainty and fairness in planning decisions for communities, including but not limited to: (a) mandatory height limits and minimum apartment sizes; (b) protecting Green Wedges and the urban growth boundary; (c) community concerns about VCAT appeal processes; (d) protecting third party appeal rights; (e) the role of Ministerial call-ins; – Protecting heritage in Victoria, including but not limited to – (a) the adequacy of current criteria and processes for heritage protection; (b) possible federal involvement in heritage protection; (c) separating heritage protection from the planning administration; (d) establishing a heritage tribunal to hear heritage appeals; (e) the appointment of independent local and state heritage advisers; (f) the role of Councils in heritage protection; (g) penalties for illegal demolitions and tree removals; – Ensuring residential zones are delivering the type of housing that communities want. – Any other matter the Committee considers relevant.

The National Trust looks forward to providing input into the Parliamentary Inquiry, which is due to report by June 2022, and will continue to provide updates on its progress.

‘The Palms’ on its way to being protected

Last year the Greater Bendigo Council decided to proceed with putting heritage overlays on a number of significant properties. One of the properties, well known to historians over the years, is ‘The Palms’ at Spring Gully. To be given a heritage overlay, a study has to be undertaken which is often costly but you do not need to wait until a study is undertaken in your area which can take many years. You can apply to council to have your property protected and if needed the Branch may support your request.



The house at 'The Palms'

Abstract from the site's citation

The subject site is located in Spring Gully on a large parcel of land that abuts the Greater Bendigo National Park. The house site is surrounded on 3 sides by creeks and races providing regular water supplies to the property. The property is a Trust for Nature conservation area and incorporates large areas of ironbark forest.

Name: The Palms. Dates: House 1914, Outbuildings c.1888. Designer/s: Unknown. Builder/s: Herbert Keck. Significance: Local. Survey date: 19 March 2019. Recommendation: Recommended for inclusion in the heritage overlay.

Site History

The first owner associated with the subject property was Hugh McColl. McColl was an important figure in the development of early Bendigo, being heavily involved in irrigation schemes including the Grand North West Canal Company and the Coliban scheme to transfer water to Bendigo and Castlemaine. He served as a member of the Legislative Assembly for Mandurang from 1880 and used this position to continue his advocacy for the irrigation of northern Victoria until his death in 1885. While there was some effort made to work the land, it was later described as 'a no-man's land. Flood-swept and worn into ruts, no provision having been made to deal with flood waters, and after twenty years lying idle the land had become re-forested'. (Bendigo Advertiser 6 January 1903:4)

McColl's property was broken up and sold in smaller parcels. Two of these eventually came into the ownership of Herbert Keck, one purchased from Mr W.H. Neill of Bendigo and a second from Mr C. Stillwell (Advertiser 1903:4). The land owned by Herbert Keck adjoined a parcel owned by his brother, James. Herbert Keck was born in Quarry Hill in 1859 to migrant parents who had followed the gold rush to Bendigo from Oxfordshire. He initially trained as a monumental stonemason before acquiring land in what was then considered Kennington in 1887.

When Keck purchased the land it was largely undeveloped. He set about clearing the land with the help of two workers and built a small weatherboard cottage to accommodate his growing family (Figure 3). A separate stone kitchen was constructed behind the main house, drawing on Keck's skill with stone. Figure 3. The original Keck cottage with brick outbuilding behind. Source: Bendigo Weekly 2017

In an effort to improve the land, Keck came to an agreement with the Bendigo City Council that would see the city's night soil deposited on his property, which was then known as Vine Glen after the fledgling vineyard on the site. The plan would see his soil improved to assist in developing his

orchard and vegetable growing business, and had the added bonus of providing an additional £6 per week. The arrangement would cause difficulties, however, as he had not received the appropriate permissions from the Shire of Strathfieldsaye where the land was located. In 1891, a year and nine months after he started receiving night soil, Keck found himself in court. Shire health and nuisance inspectors had found exposed 'effluvia' on the site and alleged that Back Creek was being polluted. The allegations were upheld and the night soil deposits ceased but the soil had already been improved. The vines that had given the property its name fell victim to the *Phylloxera aphid* in 1893. Victorian government legislation required the destruction of all vines in affected areas, even where there was no evidence of infestation on the property.

This development forced Keck to shift his focus onto the development of an orchard on the property, growing a variety of fruit including varieties of peach, apple and grape that were not commonly found elsewhere in Victoria, as well as a variety of other fruits and vegetables, branching out into flowers when it became clear there was a demand for this as well. Keck's orchard supplied a wide variety of fruits and vegetables and was described as 'one of the best fruit plantations in the state' (Bendigo Weekly 27 July 2017). The latest innovations in irrigation and planting were used on the property and the work of Keck was cited in several publications as a 'model orchard'. Not all of his work was carried out with appropriate permissions, however. The irrigation system on Keck's property drew from the Axe Creek race, which had opened in 1907, in preference to the Huntley race, which also ran through the property.

A 1908 description of the property notes that he 'constructed a dam close to the race, and now takes his water out at the irrigation charges' (Melbourne Leader, 12 December 1908:12) through a series of pipes from the dam that could maintain pressure to both the nursery and the house with the advantage that 'there is no waiting for a bath, as the bath is full before one is properly ready'. (Bendigo Independent 3 December 1908:3) In spite of these innovations accessing the Axe Creek Race, however, Herbert Keck was fined in 1915 for using water from the Huntly channel to water native grass. (Bendigo Advertiser 11 May 1915:2). The year before had seen a different water controversy, with Keck's neighbour, Councillor Curnow, complaining that he was being blamed for flood waters from Keck's property that were the result of construction of a barrier along the boundary of Keck's property, effectively protecting his orchard. His produce was sold locally and shipped to Melbourne.

Not content with selling fruit and vegetables, Keck had also established a nursery business and experimented with creating his own varieties of plants. These included a camellia 'Keck's Special', named in his honour, which can be found both in the gardens of The Palms, and in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne. H. Keck and Sons Bendigo Nurseries would go on to supply plants across Victoria and eventually to export internationally (Bendigo Weekly). Beyond his business interests, which grew to include properties in Elmore, Barham and Cohuna that were under cultivation and mining interests in Chewton and the South Wattle Gully gold mine, Keck was a director of Hanro (Aust) knitting mills. He was a founding member of the Bendigo Fruit Growers Association and president of the Bendigo Agricultural Society.

He served as Strathfieldsaye shire councillor from 1898 – 1937, five times as president, and was member of the Legislative Council for Bendigo from 1921. He was a generous community member donating both time and goods. He served as choir master at St Phillips Anglican Church in Spring Gully and donated trees for Arbor Day to Spring Gully School, as well as hosting garden days on the property to raise funds for both the church and the school. In 1914, a new house was constructed. Family anecdotes suggest that the house was the result of transporting remains of demolished Victorian and Federation houses from Melbourne suburbs to the site. The house was designed to function as two separate residences – one for Keck himself and the other for the family of his son, Thomas, who had been diagnosed with tuberculosis (per comms RM). The property was renamed The Palms in 1920. Herbert Keck died in 1937. The property has continued to be occupied by his descendants to the present. The current owner is the grandson of Keck's daughter, Nellie.

Update on Specimen Cottage

The Branch has put in a number of submissions to Heritage Victoria in relation to permits for the construction of the new Bendigo Court House and had a number of discussions with Court Services Victoria about Specimen Cottage which is located beside the Court House site. Here is a recent email on those discussions. The Branch appreciates the meaningful consultation it has had with Courts Services Victoria.



Specimen Cottage in 1964

Hi Peter, good to have a chat a few weeks ago. I hope you are very well.

CSV is engaging in a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) process as a condition of the permit recently granted by Heritage Victoria to build on the site. This will entail CSV supporting conservation works for the cottage, including to deal with the identified rising damp issue. The timing of these works is likely the second half of 2022.

The process of preparing the CMP is underway, a heritage architect has been engaged and has commenced inspecting the cottage and preparing the plan. The focus of the works will be on the exterior of the building. All aspects of the CMP process will be undertaken in close collaboration with BKL and Council, and we will undertake to keep you informed as well.

You may also be interested to know a protective fence has been erected several metres back from the rear of the cottage. It is around 2 metres in height but can be increased in height as the future court building is constructed and itself increases in height over time. Other protective measures for Specimen Cottage will be in place during the construction process, including laser monitoring of the cottage and independently prepared dilapidation reports before and after the build.

We see our commitment to the CMP process in the context of Specimen Cottage being an important feature of the future court precinct, in addition to the sympathetic design of the court building to the cottage, and also the improved landscaping for the cottage.

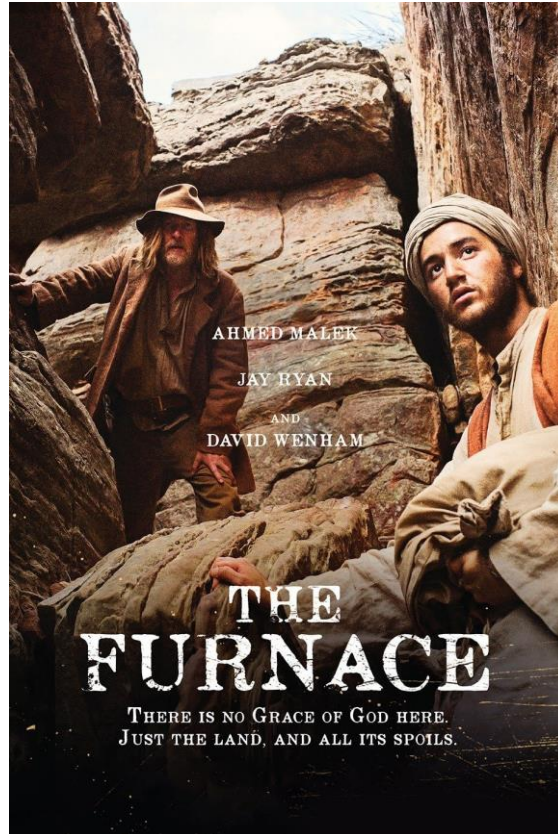
I hope this information assists – you are always welcome to get in touch if you need anything further.

Regards

Louise Mitchell

Upcoming Events

BENDIGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.
MOVIE NIGHT
“THE FURNACE”



THURSDAY MARCH 4

6.30 PM DOORS 7.00 PM FILM

STAR CINEMA, EAGLEHAWK TOWN HALL,

2 PEG LEG RD. EAGLEHAWK

ALL TICKETS \$20.00

BOOKINGS DIRECTLY THROUGH STAR CINEMA

ON 5446 2025.

PROBLEM SOLVING IN THE ARCHIVES
BENDIGO FAMILY HISTORY GROUP MEETING
2PM Saturday 20 February 2021
Bendigo Library

It's one thing to see a catalogue of an archive's collection – but another to see how they can help in practice! BRAC Archives Officer, Desiree Pettit-Keating, will explore the records kept at the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre with a view to how they can be used.

Bendigo Family History Group (BFHG) meetings are open to all and are held in the foyer presentation space of the Bendigo Library. Followed by a cup of tea and the group general meeting where guests are welcomed.

Request from the National Trust - Tree of the Year Nomination

I'm writing to let you know that we have opened nominations for the 2021 Tree of the Year competition. Each year we give a call-out to the community for nominations of trees on our register. In March, our Significant Tree Committee will assess the nominations and decide on a shortlist.

I would love it if the branches could have a look at the registered trees in your areas and provide me with a recommendation. Trees that are most attractive for the competition include: those with an interesting story or fact, that have high-quality photographs or are able to be accessed for photography, and that are on public land (though of course we will consider exceptional specimens on private land as well).

Trees are searchable at <https://trusttrees.org.au/> - however the website requires significant updates and can be difficult to use (I'm currently seeking funding to fix it). I find an easier tool to use is the National Trust database - http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/search/nt_search . You can search by municipality and by selecting 'Tree' under file type.

If you provide me with your nominations by **Wednesday, February 24th**, it would be much appreciated.

Eloise Dowd

Environmental Heritage Advocate
Email: eloise.dowd@nattrust.com.au
National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
6 Parliament Place, East Melbourne, VIC 3002

It is interesting to note that within the City of Greater Bendigo there are only 24 trees listed on the National Trust Register, and six of those are listed as “demolished”. Of those remaining, the Almond (*Prunus dulcis*) south of the intersection of the Calder Highway and Belvoir Park Rd Ravenswood currently appears to be in very poor condition. This leaves only 17 to choose from if no others have died/been removed. Some of the photos and

descriptions date back to the 1980s. Four images from the NT Register can be seen at the top of this newsletter.

There are no individual trees for Greater Bendigo on the Victorian Heritage Database other than 22 (not 24) on the National Trust Register, however trees at Bendigo Cemetery, St Killian's, Rosalind Park, White Hills Botanic Gardens and cacti at Dawson's Cactus Garden at White Hills are included in the State listings for those sites. A number of trees are included in City of Greater Bendigo local heritage overlays.

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

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A member has contributed some pictures of historic places taken during a recent trip north of the border.

We would encourage readers to contribute any interesting photos to the newsletter for others to enjoy. Please let us know if you would like to see more of this feature.



Replica of the timber poppet head of the True Blue Mine, West Wyalong, NSW. The mines at West Wyalong produced 445,700 oz of gold, this one alone produced 1426 oz between 1896 and 1920.



St Paul's Anglican Church, Carcoar



Catholic Church, Carcoar, NSW



Main street, Carcoar, NSW. Carcoar is classified by the National Trust as a built environment of significant interest and the Shire Council exercises tight development controls over the historic precinct.



An old homestead near Parkes, NSW “Tis a queer old battered landmark that belongs to other years, with the dog-leg fence around it, and its hat about its ears” from The Old Bush School, John O’Brien.

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.

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