



History & Heritage

A publication of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria)
Bendigo & Region Branch. February 2023



The Shamrock Hotel tower and its cast iron balustrade. This view of the city is rarely seen. Bendigo Town Hall can be seen in the distance. Image: Gary Hill

Cover story: Bendigo Curiosities- an occasional series by Elaine Doling

Public Talk Monday 27th February 2023, at 6.30pm Shamrock Hotel Williamson St Bendigo.
Guest Speaker; Trevor Budge AM to speak on Planning & Heritage in the Region.
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Trevor Budge who will be speaking at the Public Talk.
Image: Bendigo Advertiser

Next Branch Meeting-AGM, Monday 27th February 5.30pm, Shamrock Hotel

The branch now needs to reorganise for the post Covid period. The AGM will need to elect a committee and discussion will need to take place on the many heritage issues facing the region. The branch covers a large area including Bendigo, Castlemaine, Maldon, Kyneton and Echuca and those areas in between. The AGM is for financial members of the National Trust while supporters can attend the Public Talk and contribute to the debate and raise issues. I will be pleased to hear from you before the meeting on how you might like to contribute. You can contact me by phone, 0447473674 or by email natrustbendigo@gmail.com

Public Talk - open to the whole community

Monday 27th February, 6.30pm, Federation Room, Shamrock Hotel.

Guest Speaker- Trevor Budge

Trevor became a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia in June 2011 for services to town planning, particularly the development of regional and rural communities in Victoria, and to education. He was a Ministerial appointee on the Victorian Catchment Management Council for six years and since 2016 he has been a Ministerial appointee on the Board of the Victorian Planning Authority. His involvement in a World Heritage Bid for the Central Victorian Goldfields commenced in 1989 and is now working with the 13 Councils that are involved in the Bid. Trevor is familiar with many heritage issues in the region and will welcome your comments and questions at the talk.

History & Heritage Branch Newsletter.

Everyone has a story that, when combined with others, provide a record of the social history of our region and draws attention to the significance of local built heritage. To receive H&H or contribute a story or photograph, send a message to natrustbendigo@gmail.com To help increase circulation send it to your friends and family or sign up your organisation to receive it. To join the editorial group, contact the branch President, Peter Cox on 0447473674. The contribution deadline for the March History & Heritage will be Monday 6th March 2023.

For previous editions of History & Heritage [Click here](#)

Join the National Trust

Advocate for Preservation! Support! Explore! Enjoy! A National Trust Membership is your ticket to the world, with over 1000 destinations to explore. The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) is the state's largest community-based heritage advocacy organisation actively working towards conserving and protecting our heritage for future generations to enjoy, representing 30,000 members across Victoria. [Click here](#) to join.

Book sale

A great birthday, fathers' or mothers' day present! The branch has two books for sale. *Bendigo at Work: an Industrial History* by Mike Butcher and Yolande Collins \$40
Post-war Portrait - Photographs by Allan Doney 1900-1987 by Mike Butcher and Yolande Collins \$30.

Cover story: Bendigo Curiosities- an occasional series by Elaine Doling

The Shamrock Hotel (VHR H0914, H0223)

Most of you will be familiar with the famous façade of the Shamrock Hotel at the corner of Pall Mall and Williamson Street in the Bendigo CBD. It is the third hotel on the site. There was a theatre, restaurant and public room there in the early 1850s which was bought by Billy Heffernan and John Crowley in 1854, and their Shamrock Concert Hall obtained one of the first four liquor licences in Bendigo. The partnership did very well indeed and had a new hotel and theatre designed by Vahland and Getzschmann built in 1860.



The Shamrock Hotel and adjacent Exchange Hotel on the left photographed in 1875 before its two-storey verandah was completed. Image: N. J. Caire, Views of Bendigo No. 13, 1875

Hidden in Plain Sight - Vahland and Getzschmann's Exchange Hotel

In 1874 Mr Alexander Bayne had Vahland and Getzschmann design the Exchange Hotel next to the Shamrock. It was constructed at a cost of £4000 and was designed to blend with the façade of the adjacent Shamrock Hotel which was designed by them in 1860. The whole of the first and second floors were occupied by the Exchange Hotel, and the ground floor comprised three shops and the hotel entrance. Its two-storey verandah (since removed) was contiguous with that of the 1860 Shamrock Hotel and had matching cast iron. The façade and verandah of the Exchange Hotel remained after the Shamrock proper was completely rebuilt in 1897 to the design of Philip Kennedy. This section currently houses the gaming room and sports bar of the Shamrock. The 1897 Shamrock Hotel building was designed by Philip Kennedy, who had worked in Vahland's office for six years before moving to Melbourne. It was constructed in 1897 for Alfred Joseph and Nat Sloman. As can be seen in the images below it has hardly changed.



A postcard of the Shamrock from 1906. The two-storey section on the left was the Exchange Hotel designed by Vahland and Getzschmann in 1874 to match their adjacent Shamrock Hotel. It has long since lost its verandah, which was contiguous with the original one on the Shamrock.
Image: Victorian Places.com.au



The Shamrock today. Image: Aussie Towns
<https://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/bendigo-vic>

Hidden Out of Sight

While admiring the exuberant facade of the Shamrock have you ever wondered what is inside its ornate tower?



The Shamrock Hotel Tower - an interesting structure.
Image: supplied

The tower has an internal steel frame and is lined with Baltic pine boards. It is reached from the corridor on the fourth floor, which is occupied by small bedrooms. A very steep timber stair leads up via a trapdoor to a small platform with a decorative cast iron balustrade and a flagpole. The flagpole is of interest as it runs up from the floor of the tower in a single piece. A fantastic 360° view is obtained from the top of the tower. It is to be hoped that the view will not be obscured in future by a profusion of new six storey buildings. The photos below show some of the rarely seen inside of this structure and the view from the top.



Looking up into the tower from floor level. Note the steep stair and landing, and the flagpole which extends up through the roof. Image: Elaine Doling



Inside the Shamrock's tower, taken from the stair. There is only one window in the tower. The flagpole is on the right. Image: Gary Hill



Inside the top of the tower from the stair. Image: Gary Hill.



Inside the tower showing stair and flagpole. The door leading to the fourth-floor corridor can be seen. Image: Elaine Doling

Below left: A view from the tower looking along the Shamrock Hotel's roof. An impressive array of chimneys. St Paul's tower in the distance. Below right: Another view from the tower showing the former Post Office. Image: Gary Hill (who has no fear of heights)



Editor's note; If you have some rare photographs or images of rarely seen hidden gems you would like to share with H&H readers send them to nattrustbendigo@gmail.com let us know when they were taken, the site's name and address and if there are people in them provide names if possible.

Cast Iron Collection

Significance Assessment Report

Introduction to Significance Assessment – Cast iron Collection (CIC)

The Branch has been following the fate of the collection known as 'The Cast iron Collection' for a number of years. In December 2022, the CoGB released the Significance Assessment undertaken by *History At Work* – Heritage Consultancy, Melbourne. Most of this background has been sourced from the Assessment.

Brief background:

The Collection of 1334 (2018 audit) items is owned by the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) and on loan to the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB). It was acquired by Dr Graeme Robertson from 19th and early 20th century buildings demolished in a wave of urban development during the 1950s. The cast iron objects were mostly from buildings in Melbourne.



Graeme Robertson in New Orleans with his Nikon F camera being photographed by the Times-Picayune newspaper in 1961. Source: Denis Robertson

The CoGB considered the collection would support Council's vision 'to create a city of which its citizens are proud', and a key objective to 'continually work towards recognizing the historical significance of Bendigo'. In February 2001 they entered into a 50-year loan agreement with the NTAV. The entire collection was relocated from Melbourne by the end of 2001 and today it remains in poor a quality storage shed in Kennington.

The 50-year loan to CoGB expires in 2051 but after just fourteen years CoGB Council resolved in 2015 to return the entire collection. However, this has not yet taken place. Today, both institutions are working together to make strategic collection management decisions and develop a new vision for the collection. This significance assessment was commissioned to provide a fuller understanding of the history, development, and significance of the CIC, and to guide the decision making and new vision.

Significance Assessment 2022 - Summary of Significance

The Ornamental Architectural Cast Iron Collection (OACIC), which forms part of the Cast Iron Collection, has outstanding cultural heritage significance at a national level for its historical and aesthetic values.

Recommendations

The goal is to convert the OACIC from a liability to an asset.

This goal is underpinned by 4 priority actions responding to the request for key recommendations 'regarding future use and interpretation potential' and 'for management and preservation activities' The priority actions are to:

1. Acknowledge the original purpose of the collection and separate ornamental architectural objects from other objects
2. Develop a collection management plan for the ornamental architectural objects that also addresses the balance of the CIC
3. Connect the physical OACIC with the intellectual legacy of Dr Robertson's research
4. Enable and encourage public engagement to attract projects, partnerships, and sponsorships

The Branch has a strong interest in the future of this collection and will keep our members informed.

To read the report [click here](#). Your comments will be valuable in replying to Council and the National Trust head office in Melbourne. Some commentary will be in the March edition of History & Heritage.

Optus Tower in Heritage Precinct

The branch was surprised to see the construction of an Optus telecommunication tower between two historic precincts in a council carpark off McCrae St Bendigo a couple of weeks ago. It is located opposite the Bendigo School of Mines buildings on one side and the Chinese Precinct on the other.



Optus tower in Council carpark, McCrae Street, in central Bendigo. Image: Bendigo Branch

Optus Territory General Manager for North Victoria, Matt Connell, said Optus is pleased that the people of Bendigo now have a resilient and versatile network as well as greater mobile competition and choice.

However, at what cost to State Registered Heritage sites that people come to Bendigo to visit? Fortunately, the tower is only a temporary arrangement and can only be there for a maximum of 4 months. History & Heritage reported last year on an installation in the All-Saints site in McKenzie St where residents raised its visual impact on a heritage place.

Apparently, these installations do not need a planning permit from Council as they are regarded under low impact legislation and can have temporary approval.

Council has informed me that there are 3 applications at present and are increasing all the time as people use their mobile phones rather than a computer.

For further information from Optus: 0437015282 or write to community.consultation@ventia.com

East Bendigo Observatory and 'La Rocca' home gain Heritage protection

The Bendigo Advertiser has reported:

The former East Bendigo Observatory and associated residence has been listed for heritage protection, after the Department of Transport and Planning finalised changes to Greater Bendigo's planning scheme. Council requested the state government apply a heritage overlay to the buildings at 55 Condon Street, Kennington in May 2021.

The site features a significant observatory built in 1900 by Bendigo architect and amateur astronomer John Beebe, which is considered to be one of the few remaining observatories from the 19th and 20th centuries in Victoria. The associated residence, La Rocca, was also designed and constructed by Mr Beebe. In the department's explanatory report, it states "the former East Bendigo Observatory building which was built to house a 4.5-inch reflector transit refracting telescope, is of local heritage significance to the City of Greater Bendigo."

"It reflects advances in Australian science and astronomy, as do the roof mechanism and equipment platform that remain within the central chamber and the timber cabinetry in the adjacent wing." In its criteria, the department said the site is of historic significance as an early private complex for "its role in recording official meteorological readings from 1908 to 1914" and is "indicative of the interest in the sciences" which grew in popularity towards the early 20th centuries.

The observatory also retains the original mechanism to the domed roof, timber cabinetry and equipment platform inside, according to the department. The site had previously been listed for sale, and concerns were raised as the buildings of heritage significance potentially faced demolition.



The observatory and La Rocca in 2021. Images: Supplied

Branch still has concerns - Peter Cox

The Branch played a leading role in the planning process and welcomed the decision to have the site listed under the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. It will now consider getting the site listed on the State Heritage Register. This will be timely as there is currently a lot of information available on the site, its significance and the state process is more stringently controlled by state government legislation, particularly in terms of enforcement. At the hearing the branch did not take a position on the 10-meter front curtilage as consideration could not be given to future uses at the hearing. It is understood that the site could be used as a childcare centre. The house is in poor condition and it would have been beneficial to have a discussion on the long-term use and how the house is to be restored and for the possibility of the house being incorporated into any development. However, heritage decisions are sometimes made with practicalities not being considered. This is, perhaps, a controversial comment, but in terms of long-term preservation it needs to be part of the discussions.

Editor's note: Do you have a view on this comment? Let *History & Heritage* know.

Letters to the Editor

G'day Peter,

Just a quick catch-up – Mount Alexander Council has contractors doing lots (by the look of it) on the former Wesleyan Church in Chewton. I'm waiting on internal images of the work that the comms people at council say they'll provide, along with an article on the works going on. It certainly looks busy.

And a couple of current images of the stone wall along Forest Creek - that's in Parks Victoria's hands at present and we're waiting on news. Will keep you posted as things develop.

Cheers,

John, Chewton



Former Chewton Wesleyan Church



Forest Creek Stone Wall. Images: supplied

Dear Peter,

I would love to join the Sunday Walk but due to a very painful leg, I cannot do that. I have an old thick magazine about Bendigo from 1951 when Bendigo turned 100 years old. Can I bring that with me next time on 27th Feb and give it to you?

I am trying to organise some photos for the Capital Theatre as we performed with the Euro Fest in the Golden Journey in 1991 and have another article from a smaller magazine when the Capital Theatre reopened in 1991. Also, will pass on to them photos when we, with the Dutch Australian Friends and Euro Fest Choir, performed on a few occasions in the Capital Theatre including the Bendigo Chorale.

Are you interested in a slide show of various things we have produced for the Bendigo community with Dutch dances around Bendigo which was achieved from 1992 until 2016 when we celebrated with over 90 Dutch and various nationalities, including of course Australians, 60 years in Australia. We still celebrate St. Nicholas and do that now in the National Hotel, whereafter we celebrate Christmas. Will send a photo of last December.

Liesbeth

Dear Liesbeth,

The National Trust Branch does not have a History Collection. That role is undertaken by the Bendigo Historical Society. You can contact BHS at secretary@bendigohistory.com - Ed.

Froomes Road Bridge Castlemaine saved again!

The replacement of the Froomes Road bridge with a two-lane bridge has been defeated at the Mount Alexander Council meeting in December. It is a big win for the residents who have been campaigning for the bridge to be retained, but it will have changes to support safety measures. "It

was the latest twist in a long running saga over a bridge that dates back to 1873 but has come under risk as it ages. Councillors dismissed a new suggestion from council officers at their meeting to knock down and replace the single lane bridge with a two-lane structure 'sympathetic' to the original." reported the Bendigo Advertiser. The bridge plays an importance entrance to a sensitive historic precinct. Peter Cox



Froomes Road Bridge. Image: Mount Alexander Shire

Branch News 'In pursuit of heritage' Who can assist?

- Our first task is to form a new committee at the AGM. Contact Peter 0447473674 if you would like to assist the branch.
- Visit bridge/culvert in Spring Gully to see progress.
- Form Ravenswood Water Reserve small group to organise meeting with DEWLP
- Gather responses on Significance Assessment Report of E.G. Robertson Cast Iron Collection.
- Visit Nanga Gnulle for branch assessment & compliance with planning permit.
- Follow up with Council on works to repair Vahland Fountain in Pall Mall.
- Develop next steps for the preservation and public access to the Allan Doney Photographic Collection.
- Next steps for a New Plan for Pall Mall Precinct.
- Heritage data bases and how best to use them to protect heritage sites.
- Visit to Bendigo Joss House and Temple.

Mornington Peninsula National Trust Branch to tour Bendigo

16 members of the Mornington Peninsula National Trust Branch will be visiting Bendigo from the 20th to 22nd March to see many of Bendigo's heritage sites. They would like to meet with the branch on Tuesday 21st March and have a discussion and meal together. They are also doing a tour of the Shamrock Hotel at 4pm. The Bendigo Historical Society will host the group at History House earlier in the day. The cost of the tour & meal is \$50.

Australian Heritage Festival in Victoria

Registrations are now open in Victoria for the Australian Heritage Festival!

The festival is Australia's largest annual community-driven heritage festival. In Victoria the Festival is comprised of events from across the state organised by National Trust properties and Member's Branches, local historical societies, community museums, local councils, Traditional Owner groups, heritage enthusiasts and other aligned organisations.

The National Trust of Australia (Victoria) coordinates the registration of festival events in the state, promoting the program to a wide audience with an interest in culture and heritage. The 2023 Australian Heritage Festival in Victoria will run for four weeks from Tuesday 18th April to Thursday 18th May. The 2023 festival will explore the theme Shared Stories. Organisations and individuals are encouraged to register events that tell the stories of who we are, celebrating the rich cultural

heritage of Victoria's First Peoples, tales that tell of place, buildings, natural and cultural landscapes, storied objects, oral histories and cultural traditions.

Event Registrations close for inclusion in our digital program and marketing campaign Monday 20 February 2023. Final Event Registrations close Monday 10 April 2023

Further information [click here](#)



Image: Labassa Women Exhibition 2022, (detail)
courtesy of National Trust of Australia (Vic)

Bendigo Gas Works – Public Tours

As part of the Australian Heritage Festival, the branch will be conducting tours of the Bendigo Gas Works on two Saturdays 29 April and 13 May. The Gas Works is located on Weeroona Ave, Bendigo. The state government has now decontaminated the site. Volunteers will be needed to welcome visitors and manage a small stall. The tours will be organised in partnership with the Greater Bendigo Council.



The former Bendigo Gas Works is the only coal gas production plant to survive in Victoria. The plant represents 113 years of coal gas production and major plant components including twentieth century modifications remain intact. The Bendigo Gas Works are of architectural and historic importance and the site is on the Victorian Heritage Register and considered to be of international significance. Image: VHD B5278

2023 BHS Monthly Walks into History

1st Sunday
of the Month
at 10am
Cost -\$10
\$5 members
(unless otherwise
specified)

Sunday 5 February, 10am –

A new perspective from the Bendigo Creek.

Tour leader: Peter Cox, President, National Trust Bendigo Branch

Meet: Opposite Golden Square Fire Station, High Street Bendigo, walk to Lake Weeroona

Sunday 5 March, 10am – Bendigo Women, a celebration of International

Women's Day. Tour leaders: Heather McNeill & Pip Johanson.

Meet: Tourist Information Centre, Pall Mall, Bendigo

Sunday 2 April, 10 am – Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Garden for the Future & Larni Garingilang.

Tour leader: Friends of Bendigo Botanical Gardens guide and gardeners.

Meet: Memorial Arch, Bendigo Botanic Gardens, Napier Street, White Hills.
BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL. 0472 975 068

Sunday 7 May, 10am – Explore the 150 years of Higher Education in Bendigo. Tour leaders: TBC

Meet: Bendigo TAFE Courtyard, Chapel Street, Bendigo

Sunday 4 June, 10am – The nooks and crannies of the Capital Theatre.
Celebrating the 150th anniversary of its opening

Tour leaders: TBC

Meet: On the steps of the Capital, View Street, Bendigo

Sunday 2 July, 2pm – The Shamrock Hotel, Upstairs Downstairs & afternoon tea . Tour leader: Jim Evans.

Meet: Shamrock Hotel entrance on Williamson Street
Tour and afternoon tea \$15. Book at the Shamrock Hotel

Sunday 6 August, 10am – Carpenter without a hammer.

Tour leader: James Lerk explores Thomas Carpenter's influence on Bendigo. **Meet:** Alexandra Fountain, View Point, Bendigo.

Sunday 3 September, 10am – Follow in the footsteps of Joseph Brady – The Coliban Water System - Bendigo's lifeline.

Tour leader: Coliban Water staff. **Meet:** Sedwick - (exact location and parking details will be available closer to the event on BHS website)

Sunday 1 October, 10am – Tour of Langley Estate, a goldfields landmark since 1904. Tour leaders: Thomas and Simone Heywood.

Meet: Langley Estate, 484 Napier Street White Hills, Bendigo.
Tour and morning tea \$25. **BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL. 0472975068**

Sunday 5 November, 10am – Stories of Bendigo's Chinese Precinct.

Tour leader: Leigh Mc Kinnon.

Meet: At the Lotus Flower, Chinese Precinct, Bridge Street, Bendigo

Sunday 3 December, 2pm – Sacred Heart Cathedral – Bendigo's English Gothic marvel.

Meet: Sacred Heart Cathedral, McKenzie St entrance, Bendigo.

Special deal for Trust branch members

Bendigo Historical Society's *Walks into History* are shown here in their 2023 program.

Trust branch members are very welcome to attend these walks at the same cost as BHS members.

For further information and updates [click here](#)



Branch President Peter Cox in association with the Bendigo Historical Society leading the Bendigo Creek Walk on 5 Feb. 2023

Acknowledgement of Country- National Trust policy

What is an Acknowledgment of Country and a Welcome to Country?

At the beginning of an event or meeting a Welcome to Country OR an Acknowledgment of Country is undertaken to show respect for Traditional Owners and the continuing connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Country.

A Welcome to Country is only undertaken by Traditional Owners of the land upon which the event is being held. An Acknowledgement of Country is a statement which pays respect and gives recognition to Traditional Owners of the land upon which the event or meeting is held. It can be performed by any individual, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal.

When do I do an Acknowledgment of Country? Significant public meetings and formal events where speakers are engaged, such as the Annual General Meeting and major exhibition launch events.

Acknowledgement of Country wording:

“I would like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land where we are meeting, the [INSERT] people. I pay my respects to their Elders, both past and present, and acknowledge their continuing connections to land, waters, and community.”

The branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published monthly. You can keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog [click here](#)

National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch natrustbendigo@gmail.com

Telephone: President, Peter Cox 0447473674 Mail; C/- 57 Green St California Gully 3556.

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

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognize 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