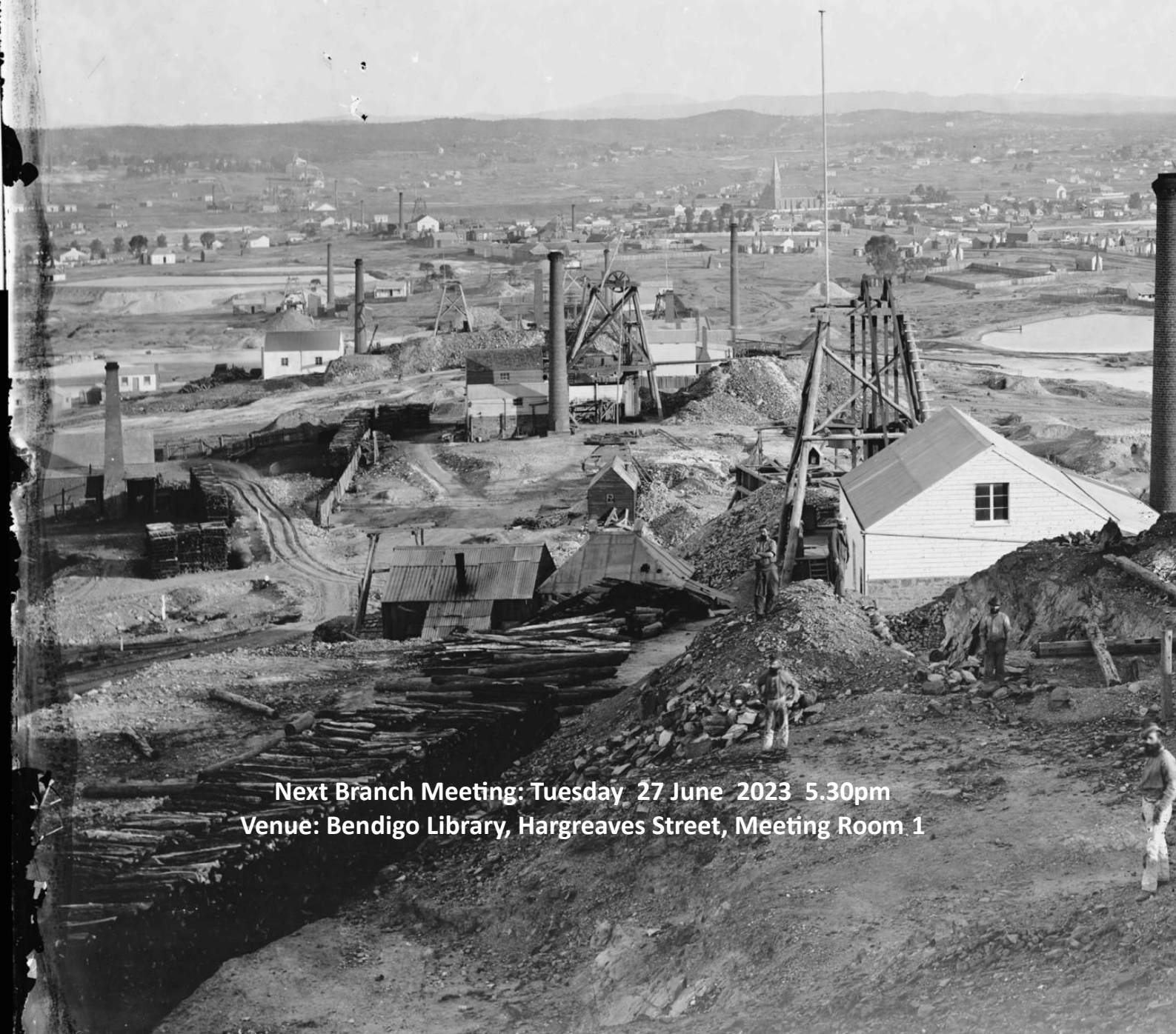


# History & Heritage

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

Cover story: Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid



Next Branch Meeting: Tuesday 27 June 2023 5.30pm

Venue: Bendigo Library, Hargreaves Street, Meeting Room 1

## Cover Story: World Heritage bid

Bendigo could find itself to be a rarity on the world stage if the central Victorian goldfields is declared a UNESCO World Heritage site, the *Bendigo Advertiser* reported last month. Bendigo's Mayor, Cr Andrea Metcalf said 'we are a creative City of Gastronomy and having a World Heritage listing in the same area would be a rarity.'

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for Australia's Central Victorian Goldfields states that it is "the most extensive, coherent and best-surviving goldrush landscape, anywhere..."

One of the criteria proposed for justification for the World Heritage inscription is:

*.. be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history*

'Historic social infrastructure is an imperative cultural marker; the new colony doubling its population between 1860 and 1900. A pattern of contemporaneous settlements linked by new transport networks reflects the shifting geography and longevity of gold output. Late-Victorian colonial architecture distinguishes archetypal 'goldrush' building functions, such as: banks and post offices; mining exchanges, mining schools and mechanics' institutes; courthouses, police stations and gaols; together with housing from the miner's cottage to the magnate's mansion.'

[Click here](#) for World Heritage bid details.

Funding of \$3.8 million has been allocated in the state budget to drive tourism, jobs and growth around the UNESCO bid in the regional economy. Trevor Budge, Council's Senior Strategic Officer driving the bid, said at the recent Branch AGM that the region is described as the most extensive, coherent and best surviving goldrush landscape anywhere. He also said that Barry Gamble, the English Heritage consultant assisting to put the UNESCO bid together, said that the former Bendigo Gas Works could be considered as the most intact of its kind in the world.

Other surviving works have been redeveloped and while retaining some of their infrastructure, they have been modified and changed to an event space or similar modern-day use. When you consider that the process started as far back as 1792 in England, it will certainly assist the UNESCO bid with the Gas Works being located in Bendigo.

Historic England states that gas works, or sites where gas was manufactured by thermally decomposing fossil fuels and stored in gasholders, were one of the most ubiquitous and widely distributed industrial complexes of the 19th and 20th centuries. [Click here](#) for further information about gas works in Great Britain.



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Cover photograph: *Goldfields and town of Bendigo, Victoria*. Image: Holtermann Collection, photographs of goldfield towns in N.S.W. and Victoria; Sydney and Melbourne streets and buildings, 1871-1876. State Library of New South Wales.



Left: The horizontal retorts and ascension pipes in the retort house at Fakenham gasworks, the only complete example of a town gasworks in England. Image: Historic England Archive  
Below: Retort House, Bendigo Gas Works. Image: Bendigo Branch



In recent years the state government has undertaken extensive works to decontaminate the site with works continuing in the coming months. This will include the filling of Gasholder Two with a slurry to control leakage from the cylinder. A permit from Heritage Victoria was required to undertake these works which included 14 conditions. [Click here](#) to see photographs from last month's tours of the Bendigo Gas Works

### Heritage Permit P37106

Heritage Victoria in approving the works has requested a Heritage Protection Plan, a photographic survey and these to be submitted prior to the works commencing. Condition 10 is far more reaching requesting an Options Analysis for the Gas Works to be submitted to Heritage Victoria within two years of the works commencing. The Analysis must present options that are appropriate and sympathetic for the site and ensure its ongoing protection and conservation. It must also include a Heritage Interpretation Plan which includes proposals for the appropriate interpretation of the history of the site.

We know that it can be expensive protecting and conserving heritage sites. It is important that the future use of the site is kept simple and that grandiose plans are not drawn up thinking that huge amounts of money is needed to be spent to attract visitors. The recent tours that the Branch conducted in partnership with Council on the site demonstrates that the history of the site will in fact sell itself. The tours were well over subscribed with over 500 people missing out on a tour place and that was with no infrastructure improvements to the site. It is attractive to visitors because it is intact and they could see for themselves how the site operated, the technology used dating back to the 1860s and the conditions that the workers, some of them their ancestors, experienced on a daily basis. 'Pop Up' events could be held at the site without interference to the existing buildings. The tools used by the workers, the former Gas & Fuel Corporation Stove Collection and other industrial artifacts could be returned to the site for viewing in a secure shed which is already located on site.

The site needs to be made secure as a priority by strengthening the fencing, installing cameras and security beams with increased lighting. The trams need to be removed from the site and no doubt that will occur when the Tramways Museum is reopened after works are completed on that site. Heritage Victoria in its conditions on the most recent permit for works at the site acknowledges that perhaps now is the time to have a future plan for the site. It has now been 50 years since its closure. As it is a community asset the Branch would like to work closely with Council and other interested parties to make sure the site has a future.



## Castlemaine Camp Reserve

### Letter to Cr Rosie Annear, Mayor, Mount Alexander Shire Council

Dear Mayor & Councillors

I write to you on behalf of the Bendigo and Region Branch of the National Trust which takes in the Mount Alexander Shire Council area.

The Branch would like to be involved in the planning process regarding the proposed redevelopment of sporting facilities at the Castlemaine Camp Reserve as it considers it is a very important part of Victoria's history from 1851.

Some Branch members recently had the privilege of taking a tour of this historic precinct visiting a number of buildings which are now residential properties in the precinct and are on the Victorian Heritage Register or are protected by local heritage overlays.

The redevelopment needs to preserve the historical integrity of the area including vegetation dating from the early period of establishment of the Camp, natural landform and significant sightlines. The Branch believes that this can be achieved along with the development of new sporting facilities.

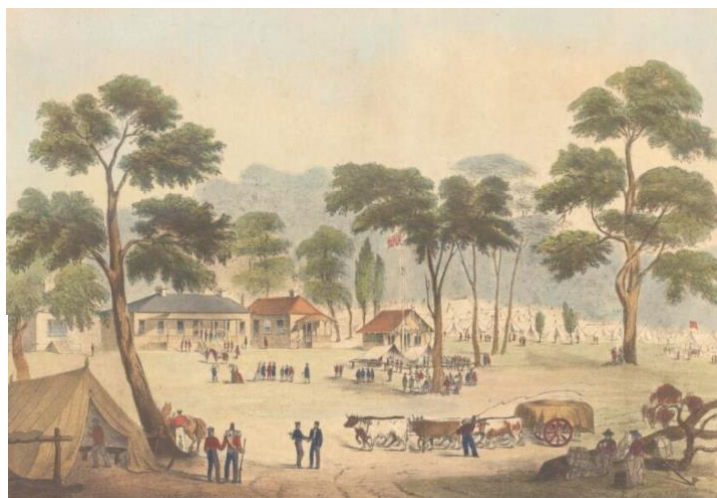
The Branch has read the Heritage Impact Statement but understands another heritage report is currently being composed. It is understood that a Cultural Management Plan will be required, and being an archaeological site, a further report will be required to assess the location of buildings.

The Branch has a copy of an Architectural & Historical Survey printed to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the City of Castlemaine, dated 28th January, 1981. The Camp Reserve and Environs heritage citation was derived from this study. As it was written so long ago, the Branch would like to see a copy of the current citation, and as is the case with most citations written so long ago, many do not comply with current legislation or represent the historical context in which a heritage site is located. Depending on when it was written, a new updated citation would be appropriate in dealing with this new planning application and such an important historical site. The National Trust is pleased to note the recent Victorian Heritage Inventory listing for Camp Reserve H7723-1266. This listing recognizes the site's historical, archaeological, and social significance.

Branch members would be pleased to meet with Councillors if you thought it worthwhile to discuss the permit application in the context of gaining much needed new sporting facilities while at the same time respecting the historical nature of the land where it sits.

Peter Cox

*The Commissioner's camp, Castlemaine, in 1862, lithographed & published by Edward Gilkes; from a sketch by Clarke Ismir. Image: National Library of Australia*



## Sampson's Cottage update.

Last year's April edition of *H&H* reported that a large part of Sampson's Cottage in Golden Square had partly collapsed. This cottage, dates back to 1856, is on the State Heritage Register. The Branch reported it to Heritage Victoria who has been trying to work with the owner, but with only two enforcement officers and over 250 matters under investigation for potential breach of the Heritage Act, their capacity is limited. However, Heritage Victoria will continue to monitor this situation and its enforcement actions will be informed by its Compliance and Enforcement Strategy. [Click here](#) to read it.



Rear view of Samson's cottage in 2022.  
Images: Bendigo Branch

## Cast Iron Collection Update

While the Branch has reported on the status and condition of the collection in the past, we continue to receive questions about its future. Here is a summary of the findings of a Significance Assessment undertaken by the National Trust (Vic) and the City of Greater Bendigo.



Item from the Cast Iron Collection. Images: Bendigo Branch

The Collection has been known as the Graeme Robertson Collection and is identified as such on the Loan Agreement. However, in reviewing the collection during the process of having the Significance Assessment done; it has been revealed that only a portion of the Collection are the original items bequeathed to the Trust from Graeme Robertson in 1975. The Trust had collected other cast iron items over time which were included with those of Graeme Robertson and therefore ended up in Bendigo.

### What is Significant?

**Category 1** Ornamental Architecture Cast Iron Collection is historically and aesthetically significant at a national level and reflects Graeme Robertson's original intent which was to collect and create an architectural based collection. (271 pieces)

**Category 2** Domestic, Commercial and Public Cast Iron items the Trust has collected and came with the ornamental collection to Bendigo (also 271 pieces) has not had any significance noted.

### What is the collection's relationship to Bendigo? \*

There is no direct link between the collection contents and Greater Bendigo as most items collected by Graeme Robertson were collected in or around Melbourne, noting that the provenance of many items is currently unknown.

### What is the path forward?

The Trust and The City have discussed in detail the Significance Assessment recommendations, noting that these are made independently of any consideration around resourcing requirements for their implementation. Together we have developed a workplan which will enable us to assign human and financial resources in a steady manner and progress the report's recommendations. Immediate action has seen the storage environment at Kennington Shed improved to enable staff to work on site, collection research and the commencement of separating the most significant items (the architectural objects collected by Robertson) from the remaining cast-iron objects.

\*In the light of this comment regarding *no direct link* between the collection and the City of Greater Bendigo, it could be difficult for the CoGB to sustain an enduring interest in having the collection in Bendigo. However, the CoGB and the National Trust (Vic) have agreed to conduct further work in assessing the future use and location of the collection. (Editor)

## Available now from National Trust Bendigo Branch:

### **E. GRAEME ROBERTSON - Physician, Photographer, Preserver**

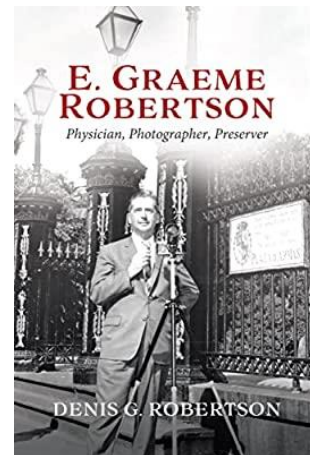
\$20 (RRP \$32.99) for soft cover and \$30 (RRP \$38.99) for hard cover.

To purchase a copy [email](#) us or text 0447473674

Graeme Robertson challenged the authorities that were issuing demolition permits in the 1950s and 60s. He believed that ornamentation by cast iron is a highly distinctive feature of the architecture of Melbourne and needed to be preserved.

#### About the book

An upbringing in an industrial suburb of Melbourne would have been unlikely to lead to the productive life of Graeme Robertson. After graduating in medicine from Melbourne University and residency at the Melbourne Hospital, he completed his postgraduate training at Queen Square in London, the world's leading hospital in neurology. After returning to Melbourne and the Melbourne Hospital (later Royal Melbourne Hospital), he gained international recognition for his work in the specialty. Not being content with this, he used his spare time to photograph and study the use of decorative cast iron in architecture with the hope of encouraging its preservation, because much was being lost due to the efforts of property developers. Several books on the use of cast iron, including a world survey, also led to him being known in many countries. Intent on preserving the best of the past, he persuaded the National Trust to restore a sailing ship, the *Polly Woodside*, which was being used as a coal hulk. He led the process of restoration, overcoming many obstacles, including finding sufficient funds, rebuilding the ship from the hull up and finding a site for public display. Graeme Robertson was a quiet and modest man who worked hard to achieve many successes.



## Kyneton demolition outrage

'Kyneton residents are calling for bureaucrats planning the [redevelopment of the old Kyneton Primary School](#) to avoid demolishing bluestone buildings. Some locals are outraged an old bluestone woodshed built in the 1860s will be demolished to build an art gallery. Creative Victoria says the building, which was part of school toilets, won't be retained because moisture is damaging it.' (ABC Central Victoria Radio newsletter)



Image: ABC Radio

What do National Trust members in Kyneton think about the Art Gallery development and the preservation of the former Primary School buildings? Does the Bendigo & Region Branch need to have a view?

## Branch meeting report held Tuesday 23 May at the Bendigo Library

- **Bendigo Gas Works**  
City of Greater Bendigo representatives Ben Devanny and Jacqueline Murphy attended the meeting to review the Bendigo Gas Works Tours. They reported that all risk management plans were completed and that Gary Hill provided all necessary preparation reports for the tours to proceed. They noted the excellent public response. Future tours were possible but noted further works were required at the site. The Branch will discuss future tours at its next meeting along with future uses of the site. New permit application for works at the site issued by Heritage Victoria.
- **Castlemaine Camp Reserve**  
letter to be written to Mount Alexander Council informing them that the Branch will be participating in the planning process to redevelop the sporting facilities at the Reserve.
- **Branch review**  
Members to be surveyed on operation of the Branch and a list provided on how members and supporters can assist.
- **Brass plaques**  
A question was asked about how many National Trust Brass Plaques were on sites in Greater Bendigo. Information to be obtained.
- **Book for sale**  
It was decided to have copies of *E. Graeme Robertson Physician, Photographer, Preserver* available for sale through the Branch (see page 6).
- **List of Branch jobs**  
They include assisting with: production of Branch newsletter by joining the editorial committee (meets monthly), website and Facebook, organising speakers at meetings, being involved with issues such as preserving heritage sites (East Bendigo Observatory, the former Law Courts, developing a plan for Pall Mall, the Bendigo Railway Precinct and many others), planning applications, and undertaking routine Branch responsibilities.

If you would like to assist contact Branch President Peter Cox 0447473674. You do not have to be a member of the National Trust to assist.

## Bendigo Branch Members' Survey - please have your say

The Branch last carried out a review of members' interests and issues in 2019. During Covid the newsletter *History & Heritage* became the main focus of the Branch raising issues of concern including 'Demolition by Neglect', protecting sites such as Nanga Gnulle, the East Bendigo Observatory, the Joss House and Temple etc. *H&H* also looked to the future in highlighting the Bendigo School of Mines, the Pall Mall Precinct and the Bendigo City Centre Plan. The third task has been to respond to planning applications, making submissions on heritage studies and generally being a voice for heritage.

The Branch will be undertaking a survey of members and supporters over the next two months. If you have ideas or would like to assist the Branch, please [click here](#) to email *H&H* or give Peter, President, a call on 0447473674.



## 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.

You can keep up with the current advocacy issues at the Trust Advocate blog [click here](#)

## History & Heritage Branch newsletter - receive, contribute, read past issues

The Branch welcomes your ideas, contributions and photographs for the newsletter which is published monthly. The contribution deadline for the June *History & Heritage* will be **Monday 3rd July 2023**. For previous issues of *History & Heritage* [Click here](#)

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 0447 473 674

Email: National Trust of Australia (Vic) Bendigo & Region Branch [Click here](#)

Telephone: President, Peter Cox 0447 473 674 or mail: c/- 57 Green St. California Gully 3556.

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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.

