

GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (May 2001)

By Rob Upson

KEY DATES IN BENDIGO'S FIRST 50 YEARS

In the years that followed the discovery of gold in 1851, the development of the town of Bendigo was remarkably rapid. (the first ten years in particular) To illustrate this, the following is a summary of a few significant dates and events during the first fifty years of our city. As my history teacher at school used to say to his pupils, "...read, mark, learn and inwardly digest..." (a quotation, which I have since learned, comes from the Book of Common Prayer.)

- 1851** Gold discovered at *The Rocks*, Golden Square, by Mrs John Kennedy.
- 1852** Dr Henry Backhaus, Catholic priest, conducted first Mass in a tent.
- 1853** Joseph Panton appointed as the Police Commissioner and Lachlan McLachlan as the Police Magistrate. Bendigo Hospital and *Bendigo Advertiser* established. Red Ribbon Rebellion in protest against miners' licenses.
- 1854** First streets surveyed and named. 98 town allotments offered for sale. Theatre Royal opened. Census showed a population of 15,480 plus 4,000 Chinese. Criterion Hotel opened on corner of Mundy and Hopetoun streets. Cobb & Co. commenced a passenger coach service between Bendigo and Melbourne. First Mechanics' Institute opened. George Lansell arrives in town and sets up soap and candle works at View Point.
- 1855** First quartz crushing machine introduced by E.J.Ennor. Fire Brigade formed and fire engine purchased. Dr. John Owens elected to the Legislative Assembly as the first parliamentary member to represent the goldfields.
- 1856** Election of the first Municipal Council. Councillor Edward Emmett appointed as first Chairman (now Mayor) of the Municipality of Sandhurst.
- 1857** Rosalind Park (known as Camp Reserve) granted to the city. Botanical Gardens commenced at Whitehills (35 acres). Bendigo connected with Melbourne by telegraph. First Mining Company and also a Mining Board established. Brewery established by the three Cohn brothers in Bridge St.
- 1858** George Guthrie founded the Bendigo Pottery. Sandhurst Club formed. Tree planting commenced in streets and parks. Population was now 28,928. Survey Office (Dudley House) built in View St. Bendigo Building Society launched.
- 1859** Agricultural Society inaugurated. Town Hall completed.
- 1860** Benevolent Asylum (now Anne Caudle Centre) opened. Gas Company commenced operations.
- 1861** Coliban Water Supply Scheme adopted by Parliament. Cattle yards opened.
- 1862** Eaglehawk proclaimed a separate municipality with James Mouat as Chairman (equivalent to Mayor). Railway line from Melbourne opened by the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly.
- 1863** First Agricultural and Horticultural Exhibition held. Boroughs of Sandhurst and Eaglehawk proclaimed.
- 1864** Eaglehawk Town Hall erected. Beehive building opened in Pall Mall.
- 1867** Duke of Edinburgh visited Bendigo and given lunch 400 feet underground in Latham and Watson's mine.
- 1868** St. Paul's Anglican Church opened by the Dean of Melbourne.
- 1871** Sandhurst proclaimed a city. Annual Easter Fair Celebrations inaugurated. Population reached 32,000.
- 1872** School of Mines and Industries opened. Council purchased the Bendigo Water Works. City Family Hotel completed. Bendigo United Friendly Society (BUFS) Medical Institute and Dispensary established. Jewish Synagogue completed in Hopetoun Street.

- 1873** Masonic Hall (now the Capital Theatre) completed. Australian Natives Association opened in the Temperance Hall.
- 1874** Royal Princess Theatre built on the site of Albion Hall.
- 1875** Gravel Hill State School opened.
- 1877** Coliban Water Supply to Sandhurst completed.
- 1879** Lake Weeroona established and Fernery at Rosalind Park opened.
- 1881** Alexandra Fountain opened by Prince Albert and Prince George (later to become George V). Population of Sandhurst was 28,662.
- 1882** Telephone communication introduced.
- 1883** Salvation Army established.
- 1887** Art Gallery founded. New Post Office in Pall Mall opened.
- 1888** St. Killian's Church, designed by Vahland, completed
- 1890** Short lived Battery Trams commenced operation to Eaglehawk. Art Gallery opened in View St.
- 1891** City of Sandhurst renamed the City of Bendigo.
- 1892** Steam driven trams commenced service to Eaglehawk.
- 1894** A.N.A. Hall opened in View St.
- 1896** Law Courts opened in Pall Mall. Building of the Sacred Heart Cathedral commenced.
- 1897** The rebuilt, and third, Shamrock Hotel opened.
- 1899** New Fire Brigade Station opened in View St.
- 1901** Dr. John Quick knighted for his role in Federation.