

# GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (September 2003)

By Rob Upson

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE in AUSTRALIA (Part 1)

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of well known literary figures paid visits to Australia and then later wrote about their experiences and expressed their opinions about these Colonies. One of these was the novelist Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) who made two visits – first in 1871 and again in 1875. Trollope is perhaps best known for his series of novels *The Barchester Chronicles* and *The Pallisers*, both made into BBC TV programmes.

Trollope was born in 1815 in Russell Square, London, the fourth of six children of Thomas and Frances Trollope. When 19 years old he began working with the General Post Office in London as a clerk. In 1843 he began to experiment with novel writing to supplement his income. In 1844 he married Rose Heseltine and they had two sons, Henry (b.1846) and Frederick (b.1847).

Frederick immigrated to Australia in 1865 and by 1871 had acquired a sheep property near Grenfell in NSW. The families of Frederick's 8 children still live in Australia and are his only descendants. In May 1871, Anthony Trollope and his wife sailed for Australia aboard the 'Great Britain' to visit son Frederick. They travelled extensively in this country plus two months in New Zealand before returning to England. Prior to this visit Trollope had also travelled through Ireland, Egypt, America and the West Indies. His experiences in the antipodes are recorded in his *Australia and New Zealand* most of which was written while travelling and was published in two volumes in 1873.

Trollope visited Australia again in 1875 and South Africa in 1877. He suffered a stroke in London in Nov.1882 and died a month later. He was buried in Kensal Green cemetery, London and in 1993 he was re-interred in Westminster Abbey. His wife, Rose, died in 1917, aged 96.

Other literary figures to visit Australia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century included Charles Darwin, William Howitt, Henry Havelock Ellis, Joseph Conrad, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain and Henry Kingsley. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century Arthur Conan Doyle, Agatha Christie, DH Lawrence, Zane Grey and HG Wells also made visits to Australia.

These authors wrote factual accounts of their encounters with Australians and some used Australia as a setting for fictional works. Australia came as a cultural shock to them and neither the landscape nor the social structure fitted their accepted notions. The European and American writers make an interesting contrast with the English authors. The former displayed greater liberality and tolerance and less racial bias whereas the English writers assumed that Australia existed only to service the needs of Great Britain. Howitt, Twain and Kingsley as well as Trollope visited the goldfields of Victoria and Mark Twain's visit to Bendigo was recalled in the Grapevine Cutting of Dec.2001.

The modern author, Joanna Trollope, (b.1943) is the niece, five generations removed, of Anthony Trollope. Her novels include *The Rector's Wife* and *The Choir*.

Next month I shall cover Anthony Trollope's visit to Bendigo.

Reference: "Australia Brought to Book" Responses to Australia by Visiting Writers 1836-1939, by Kaye Harman.

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# GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (October 2003)

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## ANTHONY TROLLOPE in AUSTRALIA (Part 2)

As mentioned last month, the novelist, Anthony Trollope first visited Australia in 1871. His experiences were published in 1873 and here are some extracts from the chapter on his day visit to Bendigo, or Sandhurst as it was then known.

*“Having thus described Ballarat, which in point of architectural excellence and general civilised city comfort is at present certainly the metropolis of the Australian gold-fields, I should lay myself open to charges of gross partiality if I omitted to give some account of Sandhurst, - which intends to surpass Ballarat, and to become mightier and more world-famous than that very mighty and world-famous place. I do not pretend to say what may be the result of the race.”*

*“Sandhurst means to go ahead, and become a great city. In regard to the production of gold it has gone very much ahead. As a city, when I was there, it was neither handsome nor commodious. It has the appearance, which is common to all new mining towns, of having been scratched up violently out of the body of the earth by the rake of some great infernal deity, who had left everything behind him dirty, uncouth, barren, and disorderly.”*

*“At Sandhurst you see heaps of upturned dry soil here and there, dislocated whims, rows of humble houses built just as they were wanted, shops with gewgaw fronts put up at a moment’s notice, drinking bars in abundance, here and there an attempt at architecture, made almost invariably by some banking company eager to push itself into large operations.”*

*“At Ballarat the chief produce of gold is still obtained from alluvial dirt... At Sandhurst the gold is got by quartz-crushing. The gold bearing rock is brought up in great masses, - thousands and thousands of tons of stone, which is called quartz. This is crushed by huge machinery, and the gold is separated from the dirt by the use of quicksilver and water.”*

*“The names selected by various companies at the Sandhurst gold-fields deserve attention. Sandhurst, which now aspires to be the leading Australian gold-field, and which certainly turns out more gold than any other, boasts at present no less than 1,200 different companies. The names chosen for these companies are certainly very quaint. There are not less than fourteen ‘New Chum’ Companies, and there are three or four ‘Old chum’ Companies. There are the Peg Leg, the Perfect Cure, the Who can Tell, the Great Extended Who can Tell, the Sons of Freedom, the Sir Walter Scott, the Sailor Prince, the Royal Louisa, the Lord Byron, the Little Chum, the Jonadab, the Hand and Band, the Happy Day, the Happy-go Lucky, the Great Extended South Golden Pyke, the Go by Gold, the Charles Gavan Duffy, the Gladstone, - indeed there are five or six Gladstone Companies; - and, to be fair, I must add that there is a Disraeli Company; I do not, however, find it quoted among those that are paying dividends.”*

*“But among all names at Sandhurst, the greatest name, the most thriving, the best known, and the name in highest repute, is ‘Hustler’. What with original Hustler Companies and Tribute Hustler Companies, with simple Hustlers, and Extended Hustlers, and Great Extended Hustlers, with North Hustlers, and South Hustlers, and with Extended North and South Hustlers, the companies who claim the happy name are difficult to count. There are at any rate two dozen of them, and all, or nearly all, are doing well.”*

Reference: Anthony Trollope – AUSTRALIA Edited by P.D.Edwards and R.B.Joyce.

(To be continued)



By Rob Upson

## ANTHONY TROLLOPE in AUSTRALIA (Part 3)

Concluding the reminiscences of Anthony Trollope on his visit to the Sandhurst (Bendigo) goldfields in 1871. Although not particularly impressed with the appearance of our goldfields at the time, he nonetheless recognised the richness and future potential of our city.

*“As regards the working miners, including all those who manage the works and overlook the machinery, I am bound to say that they are a fine body of able and industrious men. This is so on all the large gold-fields, and nowhere more noticeably than at Sandhurst. They are intelligent, manly, and independent, - altogether free from that subservience which the domination of capital too often produces in most fields of labour.”*

*“I have spoken, perhaps as strongly as I know how to speak, of the gambling propensities of the population of a gold-mining town. I should be wrong if I did not speak as strongly of the efforts that are made by such communities to ameliorate the conditions of the people. The hospitals are excellent, the schools are well conducted and well filled, the churches are sufficient, and the clergymen are supported. The money comes freely and is freely expended. And in no community are the manners of the people more courteous or their conduct more decent.”*

*“Of course there is drinking. The idle men drink, - would-be gentlemen, who are trying to speculate, without apparent means of livelihood, drink, - miners who are not mining, having what they call a spell, or holiday, will drink. But the working miner is a sober man, with a sober family; and of such the bulk of the mining population is made up. In England working men drink; - work by day and drink by night; then half work by day and double drink by night, - till the thing soon comes to an end. In Australia, as a rule, the working man does not drink while he works. The shearer does not drink; the shepherd and boundary-rider do not drink; the reaper and ploughman do not drink; - nor does the miner drink. Let them be idle for a while; let them take their wages and go away for a ‘spell’, - then they will drink as no Englishman ever drinks, drink down in a fortnight the earnings of a year. But there is less of this with miners, than with shearers or ploughmen. The miner gambles, - and so is saved from the worse vice of drinking.”*

*“I went down the shaft of one mine, the Great Extended Hustler, I think it was called, - 600 feet below the surface, and was received with the greatest courtesy....I understood nothing of all that was told to me. The experienced and good natured professional miners who conduct the strangers are anxious that everything should be made plain.”*

*“As a gold-field Sandhurst is now pre-eminent in Victoria. As a town it is not to be compared with Ballarat. As a town Ballarat is peculiarly attractive. Sandhurst, as I saw it, was equally repulsive. Everything was crowded, unfinished, and uncomfortable. Men in search of gold are apt to dispense with many of the comforts of life.....I myself, luckily, was not called upon to stay a night at Sandhurst. An evening train took our party back to Melbourne. There can be little doubt that before long Sandhurst will become a handsome city, with fine streets, imposing banks, public gardens, and well built public edifices. As a gold-field it has probably not even yet seen its richest days.”*

Reference: Anthony Trollope – AUSTRALIA Edited by P.D.Edwards and R.B.Joyce.

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