

# GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (March 2005)

By Rob Upson

## ERNST MUELLER and ETTORE CADORIN

As you enter Rosalind Park from View Point and walk along the path west of the Creek you will immediately come to a bronze bust set atop a granite plinth. Unveiled on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1914, the inscription reads – ‘Erected by the citizens of Bendigo to perpetuate the memory of the late Ernest Mueller, Esq. Born 1832 Died 1910’

Now veer left and walk up the hill and enter the Art Gallery through the café to the Sculpture Annexe. The third marble statue to greet you is *Venus Tying Her Sandal* by the Italian sculptor Ettore Cadorin. Is there a connection between Mueller and Cadorin?

Ernst Mueller was born in the German town of Erfurt situated 100 km south west of Leipzig. He came to Bendigo in 1857 and over a period of several years gradually worked his way up to become one of the most astute investors in the Sandhurst mining scene. He started off working at the flourmill of Jean Baptiste Loridan in High St.

(J.B.Loridan was a pioneer vigneron, miller, speculator and hotelier. In 1872 he built *The City Family Hotel*, designed by W.C.Vahland. In May 1856 the Bendigo Advertiser noted that Loridan had a plantation of 10,000 grape vines on Sheepwash Creek).

Later, Mueller worked with Charles Schlemm, a tobacconist and mining investor in Pall Mall. He then became a commission agent and sharebroker. In 1871 he negotiated, on behalf of George Lansell, the purchase of Christopher Ballerstedt’s properties, which included the 180 Mine and the house that was to become *Fortuna Villa*. He had considerable success as a sharebroker and then made a lot of money as a mining investor, having, at some stage or other, an interest in nearly every mine in Bendigo, in particular, the rich Garden Gully Line.

In 1879 Mueller married Anne Bertha Fredericka, the eldest daughter of Gustav and Ida Luffsmann. (Luffsmann was one of several German pioneer quartz-reefers.) Ernst Mueller was a quiet and unostentatious man who was a significant benefactor to worthy causes and people in distress. It was in recognition of his generosity and community support that the aforementioned memorial was erected in Rosalind Park. (Note that the stonemason had used the English spelling of his first name, i.e. Ernest)

Ernst and Anne Mueller had seven children, the eldest being a daughter, Erna, born in 1880. Erna grew up to gain international recognition as a contralto. She commenced her musical studies with Edward Bindley at the Bendigo Conservatorium of Music (in Rowan St. next to the Rifle Brigade Hotel) and later at the Melbourne Conservatorium. In 1904, Erna (or ‘Lovie’ as she was affectionately known to local audiences), commenced a two year world tour with the Bendigo pianist Emily Dyason and as associate artiste to the Czech violinist and composer Jan Kubelik. It was while she was overseas that she met Count Ettore Cadorin and they married in London in 1909.

Cadorin was born in Venice in 1876 into a family of artists. After serving in the Italian army he was made a Count by Umberto I, King of Italy from 1878 to 1900. He studied art and sculpture at the *Academie Royale des Beaux-Arts* in Venice and then in Rome. In Paris, he studied under the well-known sculptor Auguste Rodin.

The Count and Countess Cadorin made several visits to Bendigo and it was during a visit in 1914 that Cadorin sold *Venus Tying Her Sandal* to the Bendigo Art Gallery for £100. The Cadorins migrated to the U.S. in 1915, initially to Colombia University and then in 1925 to California where Ettore Cadorin taught drawing and sculpture at the Santa Barbara State Teachers College. Cadorin died in Sonoma County, California, in 1952. Seven years later the Bendigo Advertiser reported the death of Countess Erna Cadorin on July 27, 1959 at Napa, California.

*Venus Tying Her Sandal* is carved from Italian marble from the quarries at Carrara and now gains additional recognition as an icon or ‘trademark’ of the Bendigo Art Gallery.

References – The Annals of Bendigo.

Bendigo Art Gallery.

‘The German Chapter’ by Frank Cusack.