

GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (Feb. 2006)

By Rob Upson

ROSALIND PARK

Here is a familiar quotation.

“All the world’s a stage and all the men and women are merely players. They have their exits and their entrances.....”

Thus spake the character, Jacques, in William Shakespeare’s comedy “As You Like It”. Two of the main protagonists in this play, first performed about the year 1600, are Rosalind and Orlando. The latter has a city in Florida named after him and Rosalind has a park in Bendigo named after her.

The area now known as Rosalind Park was first designated in 1852 as part of the Government Camp to serve the Bendigo goldfields. The Gold Commissioner at the time, Joseph Panton, is credited with the idea of making this area into a recreation reserve, but it wasn’t until 1861 that 59 acres of this land were formally handed over to the Sandhurst Borough Council. This area consisted of the Upper Reserve, the Slopes and the Lower Reserve. The following year the latter two sections were to become known as Rosalind Park. Initial improvements consisted of fencing, pathways, a pond, a bandstand and planting of trees. The 1870s saw further development with the addition of an ornamental fence (replacing the previous timber one), a network of 10 ft wide paths, grassed areas and more plantings of many varieties of trees. An aviary was constructed but a few years later it was removed to the White Hills Botanic Gardens.

The fernery was established in 1880 and during this decade Rosalind Park was enlarged to include the land adjoining Pall Mall. Part of this land was reserved for the Post Office erected in 1887 and the Court House erected in 1890. Three iron bridges to link this new section with Rosalind Park were built in 1882 and in 1886 the Conservatory Gardens were laid out by the then park curator, Samuel Gadd. The present Conservatory was erected in 1897. The Cascades, mainly designed by W.C. Vahland and partly funded by George Lansell, were put into operation in the late 1880s but disbanded early in the 1900s.

We now come to the 20th Century and the following are a few of the significant developments of the Park. In 1926 the Queen Victoria Gardens were laid out and the Memorial Hall erected over the Hustlers Royal Reserve No.2 mine shaft. The poppet legs from the Garden Gully United mine were relocated, as a lookout tower, to the top of Camp Hill in 1931. A health centre, crèche and a Tourist Information Centre were opened in the 1950s opposite View Point, and since removed. A sound shell in the lower reserve was erected in 1957. In the 1990s large areas above the slope have been asphalted into car parks. Currently, of the original 59 acres less than 10 acres is cultivated parkland.

Some of the more significant trees in the park include elms, Canary Island pines, a Bunya Bunya pine and Hoop pine, both from Queensland, a Himalayan cedar, a South African Yellow-wood plus a collection of conifers.

In the year 2000, Rosalind Park was added to the Victorian Heritage Register as one of the best examples of a large historic urban public park that combines landscape, horticultural and streetscape design features.

You can read more about the park in the recently issued brochure, ‘*Rosalind Park – Discovery Walk*’ produced by the Friends of the Bendigo Botanical Gardens.

Reference: City of Bendigo View Street Rosalind Park Study - 1992
