

By NICOLE FERRIE

BENDIGO residents should not hurry to catch a glimpse of Fortuna before April 29.

The famous Fortuna tours will continue after the Army Survey Regiment changes hands.

An incorrect story in the Herald Sun said the tours would cease when the Army Topographic Support Establishment takes over the site in four weeks.

And tour numbers have tripled since the report as people fear they will miss out on seeing a major part of Bendigo's history.

"We normally expect between four to 20 people on each tour, but we had 70 last Sunday," Lieutenant Colonel D.H.O Duncan Burns said.

"Some have travelled from interstate and some of George Lansell's descendants have come to the tours," Lt Col. Burns said.

What a Life!

But the 140-year-old house and the history that goes with it will still be available to the public when ATSE takes over.

The tours started 20 years ago when the regiment decided to allow Bendigo people to share the experiences of Fortuna.

"We started to do the tours to allow Bendigo people and the wider area access to a very nice place.

"The Army is very proud of this building," Lt Col. Burns said.

Lt Col. Burns said it was also important

for Bendigo people "to put a human face on what we (the Army) do up here."

This involves seeing the work done at the regiment and being able to talk with soldiers.

And general manager of ATSE, Briar McLachlan said nothing will change.

"We don't want to see anything change

"We are certainly not going to close the tours," Mr McLachlan said.

The house was originally owned by Christopher and Theodore Ballerstedt Australia's first mining magnates, from 1855 to 1871.

But it is more commonly associated with the Lansell family, who resided at Fortuna from 1871 to 1935.

George Lansell, known as the Quartz King, was one of Australia's most successful and adventurous 19th century gold mine owners.

Lansell purchased the site of Fortuna in 1871 and stayed until his death in 1906.

One of the most fascinating stories