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WHEN Wendy Caldwell visited her family's ancestral home in Bendigo 15 months ago, she wrote in the visitors' books: "I will return."

What she did not say was that she would bring 250 relatives with her on her next visit.

Wendy's ancestral home is *Fortuna*, one of Bendigo's most historically significant mansions, and home to the Lansell family between 1871 and 1935.

George Lansell, the man whose history is being celebrated this weekend, was one of Australia's most successful goldmine owners and speculators. He was known as "the quartz king of Bendigo".

Wendy Caldwell, 50, who runs a welding supply business in Melbourne, is, like most of those at the celebrations, directly descended from George Lansell.

Wendy told the *Sunday Herald Sun* she had always been fascinated by her family's past but when she visited *Fortuna* in July last year, she was deeply affected by the sense of history it evoked.

"I knew I had to do something, so planning a major family reunion seemed a good idea," she said.

The reunion began yesterday with tours of *Fortuna*.