

GEORGE Lansell, the Quartz King of Bendigo, had a love-hate relationship with his adopted city.

As the area's most successful mine owner he was driven back to his native Britain in 1880 when angry miners placed a coffin with his name on the lid outside his home one night.

But within a short period thousands had signed a petition begging George to return. He did so, helping Bendigo reclaim much of its former glory.

Wootton Lansell, a widely travelled ship's officer, was the first member of the family to visit Australia.

He wrote to his elder



George Lansell

brother George, who was born in Kent on August 24, 1823, telling him of the opportunities for fortune making on the goldfields.

George and his second brother, William, arrived in Port Adelaide in 1853.

The lure of gold was strong enough to persuade them to try their luck in Bendigo.

George believed his fortune was to be made among the quartz reefs of the area, and invested and lost all of his savings on two separate occasions.

The turnaround came in the early 1860s when George invested in the Advance and Cinderella mines, which became the foundations of his fortune.

George acquired Fortuna from another prominent mining family in 1871, and the following year married a young Irish immigrant, Bedelia Javis.

Only eight years after their marriage Bedelia died, aged 38.

Between his return to Bendigo and his death, aged 82, on March 20, 1906, George donated much of his fortune to charities, buildings and monuments.

These included the Rosalind Park Cascades.

Prophecies that Bendigo's golden age had died with its most generous benefactor were vindicated.

The year of George's death was the last in which the Bendigo goldfields achieved a yield of more than 200,000 ounces. The industry collapsed within a decade.