

WHEN Sir George Victor Lansell died in 1959, the funeral was one of the largest in Bendigo, with the procession extending more than a mile and thousands lining the streets.

George Victor was born in London in 1883, the eldest son of George Lansell, the 'Quartz King'; and his second wife, Edith.

The Bendigo Historical Society has baby clothes worn by him in its collection. A sampling of these clothes may be seen in the Snapshots and Stories exhibition at Bendigo Art Gallery, which runs until April 20.

George was educated at St Andrew's College, Bendigo and Melbourne Grammar.

In 1910 he married a skiing champion, who was also named Edith, at All Saints Pro-Cathedral, Bendigo.

They honeymooned overseas and during a visit to Egypt, saw the archaeological site of Denderah.

On returning home, George bought a house on the corner of View and Valentine streets and named it Denderah.

The house additions by the earlier owner, George Vibert, were made by the famous Bendigo architect William Beebe and featured art nouveau work, including coloured glass windows by W.D. Mason and carved woodwork.

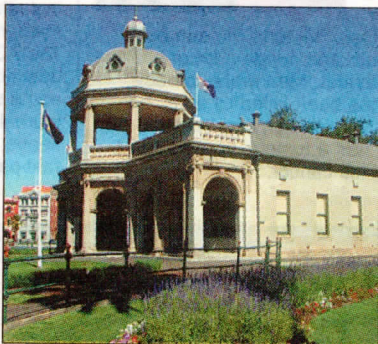
The interior features a Widow's Walk to a viewing area for his telescope, as he was a keen astronomer.

After the death of Sir George, the property was bought by the Convent of Mercy and renamed Coolock in honour of the founder of their order.

As a young man, George excelled in revolver shooting, boxing and swimming, but his military interests lasted longest.

He was commissioned in the 8th Australian Infantry Regiment in 1904 and by 1909 had reached the rank of captain.

He served in France in World War I as a captain with the 38th



LEST WE FORGET: The Bendigo Military Museum and War Memorial.

Battalion, was wounded and returned to Australia, but returned to the battalion and remained closely associated with it over the years.

When the Soldiers' Memorial Hall was built in 1921, Lansell, now a major, inaugurated a public subscription to raise money for the massive brass honour rolls.

These are an outstanding example of the coppersmith's artistry and craftsmanship.

He attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1927 and retired as honorary colonel in 1942 after having organised the north-west Victorian group of the Volunteer Defence Corps early in World War II.

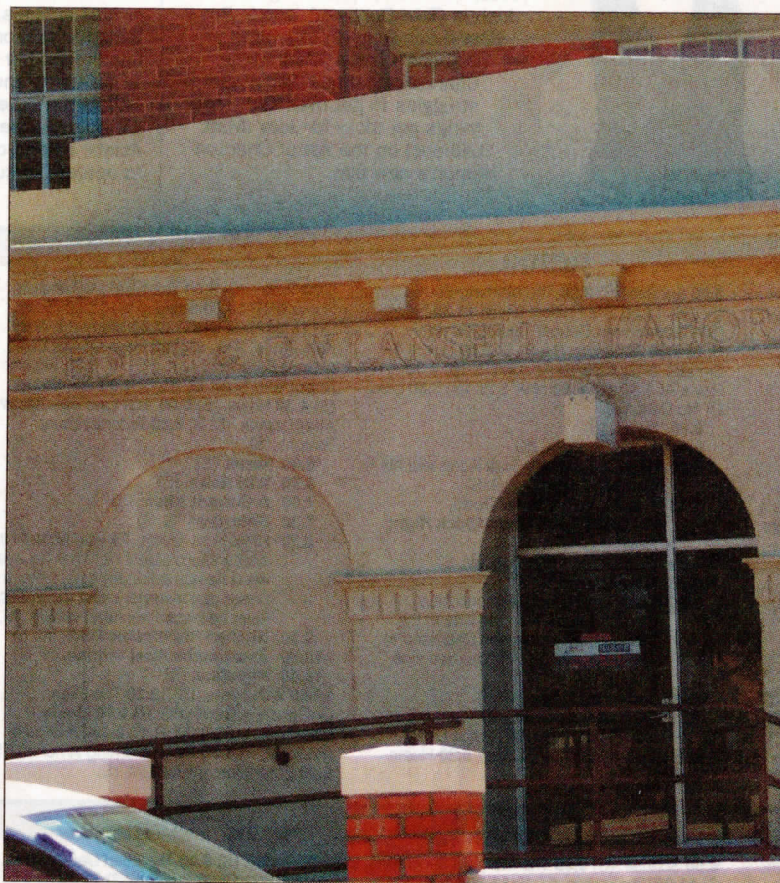
In 1928, he became a Nationalist Party member for Bendigo in the Legislative Council and later joined the Country Party.

According to his biography in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Lansell's major contribution was his service to returned soldiers.

He was president of the Bendigo branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia for nearly 30 years.

His work extended beyond grand gesture and he is affectionately remembered for his personal generosity to ex-servicemen and their dependants.

He was director of the Sandhurst



MATTERS OF MEDICINE: The Edith and G.V. Lansell Laboratory Clinic at Bendigo.

Trustees Co., the Bendigo Mutual Permanent Land and Building Society and many other local companies.

He bought to Bendigo the overseas-based Hanro Knitting Mills and the Australian Swiss Watch Co.

Early in his career, he had acquired the Bendigo Independent and amalgamated it with *The Bendigo Advertiser*.

Shy and retiring, he was the opposite of his father, but his philanthropy was no less extensive.

With his mother, Edith, he built a clinic at the Bendigo Hospital; he donated an X-ray plant, pathologi-

cal and electro-surgical equipment and a radio system for patients.

He supported the Benevolent Home and art gallery, was president of the School of Mines and had 50 years' association with the YMCA.

He was a Freemason, Rotarian and Justice of the Peace, and was knighted in 1951.

A political opponent, Percy Clarey, described George Victor Lansell as "one of Bendigo's greatest citizens and his name was woven imperishably in the history of the city".

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