



Discover Bendigo

by James Lerk

LANSSELL ERECTS AUSTRALIA'S TALLEST POPPET HEAD

When he needed to build Australia's tallest set of poppet legs, Bendigo's 'Quartz King,' George Lansell, sought out a local carpenter, 32 year old George Fauckner, to take charge of construction. Fauckner had previously carried out similar work, although not on such a scale.

Lansell needed to build a poppet head of remarkable height in order to convey ore from the new '222' mine he proposed to open, to his existing crushing battery.

When George Lansell, purchased Ballerstedt's Fortuna 1871, the extensive freehold grounds of the property were mined underneath, by what was to become known, as the 222 mine. Lansell's lease, was 222 yards (202.9 metres) along the New Chum line of reef. Thus, the length of the lease was the reason for the name, just as had been the case with Lansell's 180 claim.

It was to be ten years after the freehold purchase that George Lansell planned to erect the 222's substantial plant.

When this project was first contemplated Lansell proposed that one of the four legs of the poppet head should be from steel tube. This leg, he thought, could be used as a flue for the mine's boilers. Had his idea been practical, it would certainly have been pioneering, but the engineers did not agree.

The Fortuna crushing battery, nearby to the 222 mine, was where the quartz was to be

tramway connecting the mine and the battery would need to be well elevated. The reason for this elevation was why the 222 had such a high structure. The poppet head was 39 metres tall, compared to an average height of 23 metres for most of the others on the Bendigo field.

The first level, or landing brace, of the 222 poppet head was 24.3 metres from the ground. The legs of this poppet were raised in position by using manually operated geared crab winches.

George Fauckner was responsible for this mammoth task. He lived not far away in Wattle Lane, and walked through the winter slush along Barnard Street, to the mine site in Chum Street.

Fauckner, had considerable experience in working for Lansell, as one of his previous contracts had been the erection of the poppet head in Ironbark, at the 180 mine.

He used Stringy Bark timber, cut from the Ballarook Forest, and eight huge logs were required for the four poppet legs. When the timber was delivered at the mine in June 1881, Fauckner morticed each of the two sections together. Blacksmiths made and rivetted steel

claim to have erected the tallest head frame in Australia. Even as time moved into the twentieth century, no other mine was to rival the height of this poppet head. The gin wheels, mounted on the top brace were 3.5 metres in diameter.

Harkness Foundry, of Golden Square, manufactured what was, at that time, Bendigo's largest winding plant, to haul the cages up and down the 222 shaft. The cylinders for the

winder were 558 mm. in diameter, whilst the stroke from the piston was 1.5 metres.

Two boilers, to power the engine and compressor, were erected, and the connecting flue, joined to a brick chimney stack, shaped like Cleopatra's Needle.

The accompanying photograph, illustrates, the 222 mine, as it appeared in the 1890s. Trees planted around the boundary of Fortuna, can easily be identified

