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Dredge and dragline in historic 'tidying up'

THE gold dredge and dragline area on Bendigo Road at Porcupine Flat will be made more accessible by Maldon Lions with an allocation of \$5050 from Parks Victoria.

The grant was announced by Ron Best, MLC, when detailing a number of allocations in the shire. They are part of the Parks Victoria Community Grants Program.

Secretary of Maldon Lions Club, Shirley Little, said the intention was to make the dredge area more accessible, to tidy it up and to erect signs that interpret the work there. She said the club would not be able to add much in the

way of funds but a lot of labour would be put in by members.

Mr Best said the gold dredge was the only one in the area and the site linked with the Mt Alexander Diggings Project which will provide access to and interpretation of, an array of mining relics in and between Castlemaine and Maldon.

Stage one of the goldfields "Diggings" project was recently launched by the Minister for Conservation, Marie Tehan, at the Forest Creek site.

The historic sites include the Garfield Water Wheel, Chewton Town Hall, and the Wattle Gully mine. It will

eventually extend to the Goldfields Railway and aspects of Maldon.

The project was been developed by the Shire and government agencies for the past two years and the Shire received \$140,000 for the establishment of visitor services.

The Forest Creek site provides a rare example of hydraulic sluice mining equipment and industrial relics of the past and links up on a self discovery tour of authentic examples of mining and life on the "Diggings" trail. It involves the Goldfields Railway and other aspects in and around Maldon.



The dredge at Porcupine Flat was made there on site from parts cannibalised from throughout Victoria; the pontoons it floats on from the Strangways dredge, the buckets and other essentials from Bright and Harrierville in the north east.

Did it win much gold? Lindsay Garsed, of Newstead, who worked on it for most of its ten years of active dredging, does not know: "I wasn't at that end of the process, but there must have been a fair bit. We went through some rich pockets along that flat."

According to Lindsay, the owner, Mr George Heywood, "was more interested in making it and tinkering with it and improving it than actually working it. He was a great experimenter and we really didn't put in the amount of dredging time we could have."

Referring to the diary he kept on all operations Lindsay said building started in the 'sixties. The pontoons arrived from Strangways in 1969. Dredging began in 1972 and continued for ten years when Mr Heywood, by then in his 80s, decided he had had enough and sold out. The new owner, Bill Anderson of Bendigo, converted the dredge from electricity to diesel - electric but his venture only lasted about 12 months.

The dragline was bought from the SEC where it had worked in the Yallourn coal fields. It as

A Triumph for Maldon!

HISTORIC Maldon is no stranger to the odd launch or two, and last week was no exception.

Triumph officially launched their newest

