



Address: PO Box 613 Golden Square VIC 3555

Patron: Don Swiney MBE

President/ Editor : Gary Warnest (03) 5446 3171 (AH), Email grw@netcon.net.au

Secretary: Tracey Phillips (03) 5449 5689 (03) 5449 6330 (AH) phipsys@tpg.com.au

Treasurer : Bob Thrower (03) 5449 5663, (03) 5442 5780(AH),

Public Officer : Bob Thrower Committee : Phil Smalley, Stuart Symonds, John Phillips

Melbourne Rep: Adrian Rynberk (03) 9561 7190 (AH), Email rynberk@bigpond.com

Villa's Future still unclear



HISTORIC: Fortuna Villa sits idle.

This was a heading of a recent article published by the Bendigo Advertiser on 7 October 2011.

We all thought however that Fortuna's Future had finally been settled when an article appeared in the Bendigo Weekly earlier in the year.

“Make your Fortuna at the Villa” headed the following story:

“A Plan to turn Bendigo’s historic Fortuna Villa into a boutique casino could soon be given the green light. The Bendigo Weekly can reveal the plan, which is the brainchild of a well-known local identity, would see the villa turned into an exclusive casino for high rollers.

The Weekly believes the high security of the site, which is still owned by the Department of Defence, played a key role in the decision to push ahead with the plan. A prominent local politician, who has asked not to be named, said they

met with the developer before last November’s election, and plans were well advanced.

“Subject to Victorian Gaming Authority approval, we think it is a great plan,” he said.

“Fortuna is an asset to Bendigo and it must stay that way.

“The future of this asset needs to be secured, so it needs to make money, and we believe this is the best way this can be done.”

The politician has met with government officials to flag the plan.

The Weekly understands the casino would be called Lansell’s after the man who built Fortuna, George Lansell.

If the VGA approves the development, it is expected Lansell’s could be running in a year.”



GRAND PLAN: The future of historic Fortuna Villa could finally be settled.

The story brought outrage within the Bendigo community that is currently fighting the addition of any more gaming machines in the Bendigo region.

A simple check of the date of the publication “1 April 2011” revealed that it had just been an April Fools hoax but it did get more than a few bights.

However the **“Villa’s Future still unclear”** Bendigo Advertiser article went on to say:

“The release of the feasibility study into historic Fortuna Villa raised more questions than it answered, Villa Fortuna Action Group president Mere Hall says. The group gained access to Regional Development Victoria’s feasibility study through freedom of information. Ms Hall said the group had been denied access to the most crucial parts of the study including future prospects and financial prospects.

“They have left put all the important results of their study,” she said.

“To me it signals that it was favourable. If it was pie in the sky and they believed it wouldn’t work they would have released it. What information we have provided is What they have released.”

Ms Hall said it was unlikely an FOI appeal would gain the group any more access to the documents but it was being considered.

“Our main goal is to make sure the community knows that they’re at risk of losing this vital site,” she said.

“We want all levels of government to continue their discussions.”

The study was to assess the operational opportunity of the development of Fortuna.

“In brief, the concept seeks to stimulate arts, well-being, learning and tourism activity within the Bendigo Region,” the study states. “It aims to do so by creating a destination for community events and activities as well as a base for commercial arts, education providers and community organisations to practise and showcase skills and products.”

Last year the City of Greater Bendigo decided against buying the building to instead push for support from the federal and state governments to secure the asset for the community.

The former state government promised late last year to invest \$7 million in the building.

Fortuna Villa is a 19th century mansion in Golden Square that was occupied by Bendigo quartz king George Lansell.

The Freedom of Information Report supplied 23 pages of information, a further page was released in part and access was denied for the remaining 32 pages.

You can see why the Villa Fortuna action Group was disappointed with the release when it excluded:

- Section 2 - Fortuna Villa – Development Concept;
- Section 4- case Study- Abbotsford Convent, part titled '4.5 Some insights for Fortuna';
- Section 5 - Fortuna Villa revenue Potential;
- Section 6 - Operating Result;
- Section 7- Operating Model, part titled 'Risk Assessment';
- Section 8 -Conclusions, parts discussing operational forecasts and potential tenants;
- Appendix A -Fortuna Redevelopment – Building Concepts;
- Appendix B – Historical Development Reference;
- Appendix C – Arts Facilities; and
- Appendix D – Profit and Loss projections & Worksheets.

In essence we are not that much further along with a solution with the Villa still sitting idle except for the Security Guards the worms and weeds. This situation was recently highlighted by Glanville in the Bendigo Weekly.



Where to now....

SAVE FORTUNA

The "Friends of Fortuna" in association with the Bendigo Historical Society have announced a Public Meeting to be held on Thursday 17 November 2011 at 7pm in the Campbell Theatre of the Bendigo Library and all are welcome.

Harry Wright

We covered much of the story of Harry Wright in the last edition of Magna Carta, but it seems that there are many more stories around. Here is one from Jim Jefferies.

"I joined RASvy in June 1971 from the Royal Engineers and was posted to Topo Sqn. In late 1971 or early 1972, Don Taylor asked me what I knew about Australian Politics and the answer was, of course, not much! Don and Harry Wright took me to hear Gough Whitlam speak at White Hills Tech hall. The hall was packed and we sat in the aisle. Being ex British Army, I had never taken much interest in politics, but Gough was probably the best orator that I had ever heard. Shortly afterwards Labour was elected to govern, but did not control the Senate. The Double dissolution was called and it so happened that the Deputy Prime Minister/Defence Minister, Lance Barnard visited the Party Faithful in Bendigo. I think that Harry's wife was Secretary of the local branch, anyway he invited Don and myself to come along and hear what the man had to say at the Spastic Centre. Lance Barnard was a modest sort of bloke, but enjoyed relating how he and Gough had run the country between them from Dec 5th to Dec 19th 1972 when the Polls were finalised and a Labor Govt could be formed. After his chat, a cup of tea was served and everybody had a chance to speak to him. Harry, Don, and I literally cornered him and told him we were serving soldiers at the Regiment, and that we had been hearing rumours that the unit might be moved to either Bonegilla/Bandiana or Canberra, in the interests of efficiency, etc, etc. Now Lance Barnard listened carefully to what we had to say; Complex operations, expense of moving delicate precision equipment, production disruption, large proportion of soldiers owing their own homes, effect on the local economy, the fact that the Regt was already decentralised, etc, etc. I was quietly amused that here we were telling the Defence Minister what we really thought about a contentious issue: it could never have happened in my old mob! Lance Barnard really was a little bloke and he stood there talking up, even to Don who was no physical giant himself! Lance Barnard assured us that he would not accept any proposal to move the Regt without proper and thorough consideration, which was I guess as much as we could have reasonably expected. Anyway, as we all know, the Regiment stayed in Bendigo and DIGO is still there. Whether or not our soiree with Lance Barnard helped to keep the status quo is anyone's guess, but without Harry Wright, we would never have had the chance to put our case."



Harry Wright with Don Cocker

Evan Giri with Harry Circ. 1972





Max Neil, Kerry Gallagher, Brian Mead, Andy Covington, Don Taylor, Ted Burgess, Geoff Wasser and Bob Williams circ. 1972 Bendigo.



Yay (Exchange), John Waight, George Graham, Jim Jefferies, Brian Frost (Exchange) and Ian Bootland.

Retirement

Following the lead from Doug Carwell, Rowan Gillies, Brett van Leeuwin, Rusty Williams, Don Swiney and Peter Biorac several others have now joined the retirement list.

I (GW) have retired from Photomapping, Jeff Willey and Bruce Hammond have recently retired from DIGO and Bob Thrower is soon to join this list.



Gary Warnest, Doug Carswell and Geoff Murray at the recent opening of the Bendigo RSL Men's Shed

John Waight was also there but unfortunately he has had a stroke two years ago and is now restricted to a wheel chair. We all wish you well John.



John Waight shown here on a B8 and pantograph with Gary Kenny



Some of you will remember Jim Wells with Brian O,Neal as the original Aust-AM Graphic Services civy engineers on Automap 1, others will remember Jim as the "Lanky Yanky" although he was Canadian his accent was close enough. Jim stayed on with Automap 2 and did servicing of the Gerber flat bed plotters, went onto Telstra contract servicing and then teamed up with Phil Smalley at Macromap. Over the last few years Jim has been with Photomapping in Bendigo. With his many engineering skills he was often described as "Bob the Builder" maybe he will now franchise it as "Jim's the Builder"

Jim has also just retired but before he retired he had to become one of us" Aussies"

Jim is seen here with the Mayor of Bendigo and his Certificate. (Still did not fix the accent)



Jim Well's retirement was celebrated at the Bendigo RSL with workmates and friends.

Jim is seen here with Phil Smalley

VALE - Fredrick Ivan Moroni 24/4/1937 – 12/7/2011



Fred passed away suddenly on Tue 12th July while setting up St Laborious Hall for cards at 1900hrs. Fred always appeared in good health and kept up a busy lifestyle after his retirement. Fred played cards three or four times a week with local clubs, as well as keeping an eye on elderly friends and relations. He was well known by many from Fortuna's Sgt's Mess where he was an honorary member for as long as I can remember. He was a fine friend of Bob & Pam as we met at the RSL every Thursday for a meal. Fred was born at White hills and has lived in Bendigo all his life. He did not travel far from home, although he did enjoy the

couple of interstate bus trips with us.

Fred enjoyed jazz music and unbeknown to us was an accomplished piano player. He was farewelled with a fanfare of the big bands. "Glen Millar" etc.

Bob & Pam Mason

Fred worked for Mayfair Hams and Bacons in Bendigo and was a popular Sergeants Mess member supplying discounted hams for Xmas taking over from Wilf Bennallick who had retired. Fred then worked for Hazeldine's chickens for many years after the closure of Mayfairs.

He and Gordon Haswell would compete for the loudest and at times the most politically incorrect member of the Mess. He was part of a strong honorary member group that would always help when ever they could. He was an avid supporter of the Ex Fortuna Association and he will be sadly missed.

John Phillips reports that many old faces from the honoraries were seen at the funeral including Norm Rosewall, Frank Thomas and Darryl Bennalack to name a few. Along with many ex-members of the Regiment including Bob & Pam Mason, Rusty Williams, Noel McNamara, Bruce Hammond, Stu Thaxter, Bob Thrower and Fred Cowie. Apologies for any missed names.

Gary Warnest

Some Survey Updates

John Phillips Reports:

You never know who can run across while travelling. A couple of months ago I was in Townsville visiting our daughter and grand kids and while checking back in at the airport for the return trip who do I find immediately behind me in the queue but **Perry Langeberg** and his wife whose family have retired to the Cairns area. Perry is now living in Adelaide and working as a GIS Officer for the Aboriginal Heritage Sites (or something like that). Then while sitting in my seat I look up to a big cheeky smile from **Doug Willis** who has been living in Townsville for some time now. He was on his way to Melbourne for a big AFL fix.

Don Swiney has had a scare with his health recently. We have had some positive feedback so we wish him well. (This retirement is a dangerous business.)

Bendigo Freedom of the City Certificate



Those that served at Fortuna will remember the Framed Freedom of the City Certificate that hung proudly in the entrance foyer. On the unit closure the Certificate was carefully packaged up and sent off to the Corps museum at Moorebank.

Earlier this year a DIGO member was at the local tip recycle yard and there was a picture frame for reuse, the glass had been broken but sitting behind the broken pane was an AHQ Survey Regiment Freedom of the City Certificate.

That in itself was not unique because many copies of the graphic that appeared in the Freedom of the City booklet were printed. The certificate that was reproduced is shown on page 97 of the Mapmakers of Fortuna with its litho look-a-like grey seal.

This certificate however was an original with its proper wax seal. Thankfully he retrieved it and the Ex Fortuna Association has had it remounted and reframed.

It must have been the City of Bendigo's original Certificate. How quickly things change with the knowledge and the significance of events lost and discarded.



Many past members of the Survey Regiment have stayed in the Bendigo region and are active in the community. Seen here is Bob Mason, the president of the Bendigo Orchid Club at its recent Spring Show.

Vietnam War- A Good Story for a Change

So often the things written about the Vietnam War are focussed on the negative but 3411521 Tpr Geoff Murray "Muzza" made a positive contribution. Geoff served with 3 Cav Regt on his first tour in 1968-69 and then with the 1st Topo Svy Tp for his second tour in 1970-71. It was during this second tour that he decided to support the Baria orphanage that was only a few miles south of the Australian base at Nui Dat. Geoff would "acquire" food for the orphanage as best he could.



It was during this time that he met Sister Augustine and Sister Marie Du Calraire who were running the orphanage.

Unloading food at Baria



Caring for a Vietnamese orphan



Earlier this year, Sister Augustine at her current orphanage in Ho Chi Minh City

70th Anniversary for Australian Women's Military Services

This year celebrates the 70th Anniversary for the formation of the Women's Military Services. WAAAF for the Air force, WRANS for the Navy and AWAS for Army. I was surprised to see this photo appear in an article in the Veteran's Affairs Newsletter No27 on the topic.



Bendigo, VIC. 1957-05. Two members of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC), attached to the Royal Australian Survey Corps, working on topographical survey maps. Note the Army Headquarters badges on their right arms. Image courtesy of AWM.

Can anyone identify these WRAAC Members?

Centenary Royal Australian Survey Corps

The Centenary of The Royal Australian Survey Corps is 1st July 2015. Plans are currently being put in place for the Centenary of the Anzac Landing in the same year. Some government funding maybe available in conjunction with the Anzac Celebrations but planning should be initiated now. All celebrations should be part of a coordinated effort between all State Survey Associations to ensure that there is no duplication or conflict between planned activities. I would expect that the Museum and possibly the Australian War Memorial maybe involved. Suggestions and expressions of interest for activities are welcome.

Bendigo Happy Hours

Happy Hours will be on the **First Friday** of the Month but now located at the **Gold Mines Hotel** Marong Road. Bistro meals are available if required. See you there.

Magna Carto Postal Distribution

The Magna Carto is no longer distributed largely by post. If you have not already contacted us to arrange Magna Carto in hard copy form through the post then we request that you advise the secretary as soon as possible. Please confirm your desired postal address.

**The Secretary, Tracey Phillips
ExFortuna Survey Association
PO Box 613 Golden Square VIC 3555**

(03) 5449 5689 or (03) 5449 6330 (AH) or phipsys@tpg.com.au

The Magna Carto is available through the ExFortuna Survey Association Homepage. www.exfortunasy.org.au If you haven't visited the site yet, go and have a look. It includes previous Magna Carto and photos.

Membership Remains at \$10 per year and we are able to accept Internet Banking Transfers

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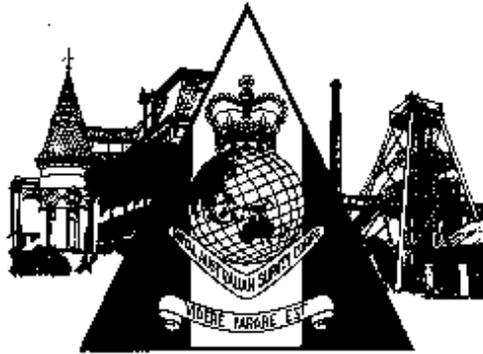
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2011 AGM

The 2011 AGM is to be held at the **Borough Club 2-4 High Street Eaglehawk** (03)54461000 as the Bendigo RSL is booked out on **Friday 18 Nov 2011**.

Drinks at 1700hrs with meeting start at 1730hrs. As usual this will be a short but informative meeting. Please come along for a short while to enjoy the company and ensure that we have enough numbers for a quorum. Bar snacks provided. A bistro meal is available for anyone wishing to stay on after the meeting. See you there.



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