

E-Newsletter from the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

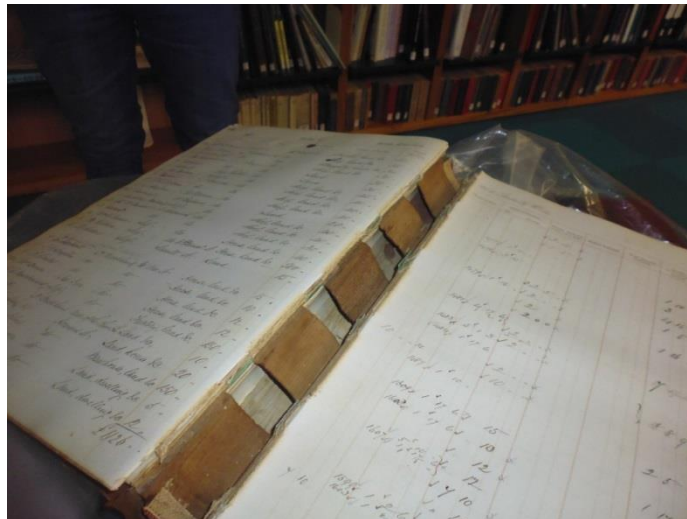
Welcome to the sixth issue of Bric-a-BRAC, the Bendigo Regional Archives Centre's E-newsletter.

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[Restoration of Bendigo Rate books completed](#)

The last of the six Bendigo Rate books sent for conservation work to our local expert, Simon Dart, was returned in June. BRAC wishes to acknowledge the grant received in 2014 from the Frances and Harold Abbott Foundation, administered by Sandhurst Trustees Limited (STL), and thank the STL Board for recognising the importance of conserving these historic records. Below is a photo of the 1861 volume before the restoration work was undertaken.



[BRAC National Family History Month activities in August](#)

To celebrate National Family History Month, BRAC staff have planned four activities for the public.

Wed 12 August (11-12) and Thurs 13 August (2-3) “Behind the scenes” tours of the BRAC repository. This is your opportunity to see quirky examples of records in the collection, and go ‘behind the scenes’ where they are housed.

Wed 19 August “Ancestors in the Archives” Workshop (10.30-12). Come and learn which BRAC records you can research, in order to find your ancestors’ footsteps.

Thurs 20 August (5.30-6.30pm). A repeat session of “**Vahland in the Archives**” talk by Dr. Michele Matthews. This talk examines William Vahland’s relationship with Sandhurst/Bendigo Council during the years 1864-1899. Hear about the city’s most famous Architect’s previously unknown disputes with local civic leaders in 1870 and 1881, and details of his architectural contracts for the Council, especially the Alexandra Fountain and the Town Hall.

All activities will be held in the BRAC Reading Room. Please book via www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au or send an email to brac@ncgrl.vic.gov.au or phone 5449 2703; leave your name, contact details, and which event you wish to attend.

[More Petitions available online](#)

The next stage of the Digitised Petitions’ project will be available on the BRAC website at www.brac.vic.gov.au/Collections/Digital_Records_Petitions by the end of August. One large 1890 petition presents the united views of people from various religious denominations, who all objected to Sunday not being respected as a day of rest. Another petition from 1899 was a push against a sports ground being created in the Upper Reserve (now Rosalind Park). Three smaller petitions deal with other issues. A total of 2,018 people signed these five petitions. Happy reading!

[Back in Time](#)

As August is National Family History Month, the focus in this article is on one unknown local, as an example of how records at BRAC can help family researchers “flesh out” members of their own family trees. **William Buttle** corresponded with Sandhurst/Bendigo Council frequently during the 1870s-1890s. (VPRS 16936) His letters tell us much about the man, and what was happening in his part of the city-Quarry Hill. His writing style suggests an educated older man, who may have been bored so he had time to put pen to paper. Often, he gave Council advice about infrastructure problems, and enclosed diagrams of his ideas or inventions.

His October 1870 letter to Council ran to three pages of notes, about a model tramway he had designed which would be “suitable for a line to convey street-metal...” (Box 2, 05/10/1870) In 1872, he sent a letter and drawing of his early ideas for road building. (Box 8, 04/08/1872) He developed this idea further in a three page missive in 1890. (Box 31, 09/09/1890) In 1891, he shared his ideas for drain and gutter construction. (Box 34, 13/07/1891) In 1893, William sent in his detailed plan for disposing of night soil. His method was “incineration or combustion.” (Box 37, 15/02/1893) The following year, he had an idea for an air-tight sanitary pan. (Box 39, 22/03/1894)

In 1883, William asked the Council's permission to exhibit his "**Cycleopede**" in the Corn Exchange, and charge admission; this was his invention of a chair for invalids or disabled people. (Box 21, 26/11/1883)

In 1891, William waded into the Tramway system's difficulties, when he wrote to suggest a way of converting the system to "Cable Traction". (Box 33, 08/06/1891) Three years later, he wrote of an improved Tram system, that would not require horses, electricity or cables, rather "a one horse power Steam Engine" (Box 39, 11/06/1894) Also in 1891, he turned his inventive brain to designing what he described as a "safe, light and cheap Fire escape apparatus." (Box 34, 23/12/1891)

In May 1892, William wrote that "**The Northern district of Bendigo is infested and contaminated by the propensities of the youth. [Many locals] suffer varying annoyances and pecuniary loss.**" He also noted he had lived in Bendigo for 37 years, which made him a very early resident of the city. (Box 35, 09/05/1892) Constable English responded to William's complaint, and made the following observations in his report back to Council: "I have known Mr. Buttlet for years, he is most eccentric in his ways and generally occupies his time in making models of Railway Engines, Sewing Machines and ships... None of the offences mentioned...exists in this part of the city, and in my opinion they only exist in his imagination." (Box 35, 18/05/1892) Somehow William heard about, or saw, this report; he responded that English "who has an aversion to inventions, and appears to sympathise with Stone throwing obscene Juveniles had addressed a not very elegant epistle to the ex Superintendent of police..." (Box 35, 01/06/1892) ***Note the early usage of the word "Juveniles".**

William Buttlet was a most fascinating nineteenth century Bendigonian!

Until Next Time

Thank you for subscribing to our e-newsletter. Our next issue of Bric-a-BRAC will be sent out in November 2015. We will share news, details of upcoming events, and more snapshots of our Records. Until then, happy researching!

BRAC Staff

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Open Hours

Wednesday and Thursday 10am – 4.30pm (except public holidays)

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