



# *Bric-a-BRAC* May 2017

## E-newsletter - Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

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Welcome to the second issue for 2017, of our quarterly e-Newsletter Bric-a-BRAC.

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### [Successful May 2017 National Trust Heritage Festival events at BRAC](#)

BRAC and Bendigo Library celebrated the Australian Heritage Festival this month by focusing on Finding a Voice: Women and Children on the Goldfields.

85 people attended 6 sessions all held in the BRAC Reading Room. While most were locals, we had participants travel from Melbourne and other parts of central Victoria specifically to attend.

Speakers Mark Grealy and Michele Matthews highlighted records from PROV and BRAC respectively and Rita Hull spoke of her research into Lodges and Friendly Societies where women advocated fiercely and had their own organisations. The popular Trace the History of your House workshops highlighted the BRAC Rate Book collection but also the information available from Directories and Electoral Rolls in the Library collection. Participants worked engrossed for a further hour after the second workshop, making use of the collected resources.

A capacity crowd enjoyed Michele's talk and tour of the Repository.

Stay tuned for events in mid-August for National Family History week.

### [Mining Applications held at BRAC have been indexed](#)

We are pleased to announce that a small project to index the 212 Mining Applications held in Boxes 32 and 36 within the series **(VPRS 16936) Sandhurst/Bendigo Inwards Correspondence 1856-1899**, has been completed. Each document contains the applicant's name, the location of the mining lease applied for, a diagram of the geographic location of the land, and sometimes associated correspondence between the applicant and the Council. These Mining Applications span 1866-1890.

## Uses of Our Records

What questions do BRAC researchers try to find answers to? Here is a sample of the reasons driving them in the months February 2017-April 2017, giving readers some insight into the myriad questions BRAC records can answer.

### **February 2017**

- A member of the Friends of the Bendigo Botanical Gardens group spent time researching the history of the deer sculpture located at the gardens. She used numerous volumes of **Bendigo Council Committee Minutes** to confirm the deer was presented as a gift to the Council in 1934.
- A family history researcher used **Bendigo Licensing Court** volumes to locate his grandmother's time as the publican of a Bendigo hotel.
- A La Trobe University student used 16 volumes of **Bendigo Rate books** and **Building Registers** to trace the history of selected houses in Long Gully for her essay.

### **March 2017**

- Queensland researchers used **Bendigo Cause Lists- Civil and Criminal** volumes to locate an 1881 case of a wife suing her husband for maintenance for their son, and then what happened to that son after his mother died.
- A NSW researcher returned to use **Shire of Marong Rate books**, to trace ancestors' land ownership at Myers Flat from the 1880s-1900s.
- A Bendigo Art Gallery Curator used the **Bendigo Inwards Correspondence** collection to locate sample documents for her upcoming Post Office Gallery exhibition about Hotels in Bendigo and district.

### **April 2017**

- A Melbourne researcher used the Bendigo Rate Books to follow the residents of a family property that remained part of her relative's estate for more than 110 years after her death.
- Staff selected numerous BRAC records to illustrate their talks about "Finding Women and Children in BRAC records" and "Tracing the History of your House". Both events are part of the National Trust's Heritage Festival in April-May 2017. Records included **Bendigo Cause Lists-Civil and Criminal**, **Bendigo Divorces**, **Bendigo Insolvency and Licensing Courts** vols., **Bendigo Inwards Correspondence** examples, **Rate books** from all 8 Councils- Bendigo, Eaglehawk, Huntly, Marong, Strathfieldsaye, Heathcote, McIvor and Raywood, and **Bendigo Council Staff Salary** books.
- A local researcher successfully traced the history of his house, "Symbester", using **Shire of Strathfieldsaye Rate books**. The property changed from "garden" in 1904 to "House and land" in 1905.

## Shire of Loddon records now held at BRAC

Three new series of records were transferred to BRAC custody in March.  
These series are:-

VPRS 18360/P1	Units 1 - 67	Minute Books and Reports to Minutes	1929 - 1995
VPRS 18362/P1	Units 1 - 2	Notices of Motion	1892 - 1993
VPRS 18364/P1	Units 1 - 2	Presidents' Reports	1953 - 1973

Volumes from these series can be ordered online at [www.prov.vic.gov.au](http://www.prov.vic.gov.au) just like you do for any other records held at BRAC.

## [Back in Time](#)

Having a Voice: Women and Children in the Archives: a summary of Michele's talk from 4 May 2017.

**Women and Children** appear in BRAC records in both expected, and sometimes more unusual, ways. Many Women were occupiers (ie renters) or property owners in their own right. Female shop keepers and publicans are sprinkled throughout all eight series of **Rate books** held at BRAC-the former City of Sandhurst, Boroughs of Eaglehawk, Heathcote and Raywood, and the Shires of Huntly, Mclvor, Marong and Strathfieldsaye.

In Court records, Women appear within **VPRS 16736 Bendigo Cause Lists-Criminal** volumes charged with crimes as varied as Prostitution, Insanity, being the victim of domestic violence or sexual assault. In **VPRS 16735 Bendigo Cause Lists-Civil** volumes, Women are charged with anything from drunk and disorderly, obscene language, and theft through to cases of Women charging the father of their illegitimate child for not having paid them maintenance to support their child financially. There are a handful of cases of Women declared insolvent, which appear in **(no VPRS) Bendigo Insolvency Court** volumes held at BRAC. Divorce cases spanning 1892-1918 are recorded in **(no VPRS) Bendigo Decrees, Judgements and Orders**. A surprisingly high number of these cases involved a male co-respondent, suggesting that the wife was committing adultery, which then was the main accepted grounds for Divorce.

Children's 'voices' are more difficult to 'hear' in any historic records, but snippets of their life stories are captured in nineteenth century Court records. Children appeared in front of local Magistrates as "neglected", a word that probably covered numerous scenarios from death of parent/s to abandonment. Often, they appeared in sibling clusters. The five Taverner children are one example. Ranging from only 8 months to nine years, Thomas, Pearce, Frederic, Mary and Sarah appeared in Sandhurst Court on the second day of the New Year 1878. The older two, Sarah and Mary, and baby Thomas, were sent to "Royal Park" (Industrial School), while their two brothers were to go to the local Sandhurst Industrial School. Two aspects make these unfortunate children unusual. First, the siblings were not all sent to the same institution. Secondly, they were all to remain at their respective schools for only seven years. (Normally, the action notation stated that the child was to remain there until their fifteenth Birthday.)

These five innocent Children are examples of a BRAC Court case dovetailing into the files for such Children held at PROV in North Melbourne. These files are the series **VPRS 4527 Children's Registers**. The five siblings' files, numbered consecutively from No. 1529-1533, show the files were created at the same time, even though the siblings were geographically separated. Notations about both parents explain why the Taverner children were put into the care of the State. Their mother, Margaret Taverner, was described as being of "intemperate habits". She was a patient in the Bendigo Hospital at the time her children were removed from her care, while their father, Thomas Taverner, was described as a "cripple". This physical state was a direct result of an axe wound inflicted upon him three years before, while he slept; the attacker was his wife! (**Bendigo Advertiser**, 03/01/1878)

The names and ages of local Children also appear in our **Cause List-Civil** volumes for Bendigo and **Elmore (VPRS 16697)**, when their parents are charged with "Neglecting to send child to school".

## Until Next Time

Thank you for subscribing to our E-newsletter. The next issue of Bric-a-BRAC will be available in August 2017. We will continue to provide updates, promote events and happenings, as well as share more snapshots of our wonderful records. Until then, happy researching!

### **BRAC Staff**

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**Opening Hours:** Wednesday and Thursday 10 am-4.30 pm (except public holidays)