



Bric-a-BRAC November 2016

E-newsletter - Bendigo Regional Archives Centre

Welcome to the fourth issue for 2016, of our quarterly e-Newsletter Bric-a-BRAC.

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BRAC will be closed on Wednesday 7 December 2016, for staff training.

For the Christmas/New Year period, BRAC will close at 4.30pm on Thursday 22 December 2016 and re-open at 10am Wednesday 11 January 2017.

Impressions from our relieving staff member

It's been a steep learning curve but very inspiring since joining BRAC in September (when Michele was overseas on long service leave)- in particular working with the volunteers who are so passionate and knowledgeable about history and research.

I love working at BRAC because it's so deeply embedded in the local community. It has a cooperative relationship with the Goldfields Library Corporation and local history and genealogy groups such as the AIGS Bendigo - Bendigo Family History Group and Bendigo Regional Genealogical Society. BRAC is not just concerned with protecting and making records accessible but focuses on *people* and helping them build their narrative and understand their history.

I have a broad background working in universities, corporate research, public libraries and most recently in IT with an Information Management software vendor. I hope to apply these skills and experience at BRAC. I have a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology), Graduate Diploma in Information Management and Masters Degree in Information Studies specialising in Records and Archives Management. I grew up in Wollongong and moved to Melbourne 10 years ago. When I'm not in the archives I'm having fun with my kelpie, Calin.

Nicole Hilder

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 August-October 2016, giving readers some insight into the myriad questions BRAC records can answer.

August 2016

- Michele picked numerous records for the Family History Month workshop- 1 Rate book from each of the 8 Councils, Bendigo Correspondence Register, Victorian Gold Jubilee Entries, Bendigo Sanitary Charges for non-rateable Properties, Bendigo Council Staff Salaries, 19th C Correspondence, and various Court Records-Licensing, Divorce, Insolvency, and Cause List-Criminal.
- 11 boxes of Bendigo Council Maps and Plans were searched for an investigation into gold mine capping in the Bendigo CBD. Other interesting details about streets and water courses were discovered in the process.
- Bendigo Council Staff Salary books were used to identify the various Bendigo Cemetery sextons over time. This information has not been indexed before.

September 2016

- In the Bendigo Council Maps and Plans collection, we discovered a series of plans relating to the Sexton's residence and other outbuildings for Sandhurst (Bendigo) Cemetery and an 1873 set of Plans for the Bendigo Creek. The creek plans will be used to support conservation of the Golden Square section of the creek. (See the image below)
- Several researchers used Rate books to try and identify when houses were built. One Golden Square property caused entertainment and confusion when trying to follow the Rate assessor's path. He seemed to use back yards or invisible lanes to move from street to street rather than walk the length of some streets or around a block in a recognised path.
- The index to 30 boxes of Bendigo Council's 19th century Correspondence is being continued by a BRAC volunteer, with 10,867 items listed so far.



Plan of a section of the Bendigo Creek, 1873, Bendigo Council's Maps and Plans collection, Box 25, ©Bendigo Regional Archives Centre (BRAC).

October 2016

- A City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) staffer used Bendigo Council Minutes and Committee Minutes to search for evidence about the locations of the local Temperance water fountain.
- A QLD researcher used Rochester Rate books, to follow through the land ownership of her family in that shire during the twentieth century.
- Hundreds of Petitions to Bendigo Council, transcribed and digitised for BRACs major Petitions' project, have been returned to their respective archival boxes.
See http://www.brac.vic.gov.au/Digital_Records/Petitions_1870-1899
- A local researcher used the Bendigo Rate books to trace the history of the Golden Square Methodist manse.

Back in Time

Nineteenth century Sandhurst would have been a dangerous place to walk or ride at night, with pot holes in roads, not all footpaths formed, and mining activities. You took your life in your hands to navigate sections of the city. It is therefore not surprising that numerous pieces of incoming correspondence, both letters and petitions, contained requests to the Council for a Street Light to be constructed in the relevant street.

Between 1870-1873, no less than 14 Petitions requested Council to provide street lamps for various street corners located in the city centre, Long Gully, North Bendigo and Quarry Hill, You can read these Petitions about street lighting in the BRAC online digitised Petitions' project at http://www.brac.vic.gov.au/Digital_Records/Digital_Records_Petitions/Lighting (More petitions about this issue exist; they are being digitised now, and will be added to the BRAC website in the future.) A wonderful **Map** in the Bendigo Council Maps and Plans collection, held at BRAC, illustrates where each street light was located throughout the city. (Map 15, Bundle 1)

Reports to Council tell us the evolution of the city's street lighting system. An 1870 report stated there were a total of 163 lamps, with 102 being gas and 61 kerosene-driven. The times for lighting and extinguishing were defined as- "When no moon all night and when moon before rising and after setting." (12/07/1870, Box 2) One irate shop keeper wrote that if the street lamp near his shop had not been extinguished, he would not have been burgled! (22/06/1882, Box 18)

By 1881, TJ Connelly Sr. suggested that the Council may wish to replace the city's kerosene lamps with the new "Gasoline Lamps". (09/09/1881, Box 17) It was nearly four years later before Knight, the City Surveyor, reported he had experimented to see if gas-lit lamps were better than kerosene lamps. (24/04/1885, Box 22)

From the mid-1880s, different companies in Melbourne, even one in New Zealand, asked the Council to consider converting the city's street lamps to electricity. (27/02/1885, Box 22; Dec. 1887, Box 26; 18/09/1889, Box 29) Probably in response to these overtures, the local law firm Crabbe, Cohen and Kirby, writing on behalf of the Bendigo Gas Co., warned the Council against granting "exclusive rights" to one company "for the erection in the public streets of the City of poles for Electric lighting purposes." (19/02/1892, Box 35) Council sought its own legal advice from prominent barrister, Dr. John Quick, who analysed the Act

governing the Bendigo Gas Co.; he concluded the Gas Co. had NOT been given a monopoly over local electric lighting. (15/02/1892, Box 35)

The transition to electric street lighting in Bendigo commenced in 1893. A legal agreement between the Council and the Bendigo Electric Co. Ltd., for “electric street lighting”, is dated 9 June 1893. (Box 37) By August 1894, George Minto, the City Surveyor, reported that “The extension of the electric lighting along Mt. Korong road, High and Bridge St. is almost completed.” (03/08/1894, Box 40) But this change-over took time- and money. In August 1895, Minto reported the city’s street lighting was comprised of 30 electric “arc lamps”, 249 gas lamps and 188 kerosene lamps. (10-16/08/1895, Box 42)

There was also the issue of damage to Street lighting. Minto reported broken and damaged street lamps; he termed it “this wanton destruction of Public property.” (25/03/1893, Box 37) Two 1895 reports itemised broken street lamps around the city; the address of each lamp was stated. (27/04 and 29/04/1895, Box 41)

***All the correspondence quoted in this “Back in Time” article is housed in VPRS 16936 Sandhurst/Bendigo Council Inwards Correspondence 1856-1899.*

Michele is back from Long service leave

I took nine weeks long service leave from 18 August-18 October. A highlight of my six weeks travelling through Europe was my visit to Sir John Quick’s family farm near St. Ives, Cornwall. One of the 50 authors of the Australian Constitution, Quick’s life was the subject of my Masters’ thesis. Much correspondence from him to the Sandhurst/Bendigo Council is held in the BRAC collection. I have many great memories, and my batteries are re-charged! I’m ready to again assist BRAC researchers in person, by email or phone. I look forward to hearing from you! Dr Michele Matthews

Until Next Time

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

BRAC Staff

Dr Michele Matthews, Archives Officer (Tues, Wed, Thurs)

Vivien Newton, Archives Officer (Wed, Thurs.)

Nicole Hilder, Archives Officer- relieving (Wed, Thurs.)

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

See above for Christmas and New Year closures.