

THE ALVIS CAR CLUB OF VICTORIA

BENDIGO PIONEER RALLY: JUNE 11-13, 1977

PROGRAM - SATURDAY, June 11, 1977

1.15 p.m. Move off from start - Proceed in convoy through Bendigo to Epsom to visit the Bendigo Potteries which was started in 1857.

2.00 p.m. Pottery visit commences.

3.30 p.m. Leave Pottery. Turn right for Eaglehawk just past the twelve banana palms on your left. This is a scenic run taking you past the Bendigo Sewage Treatment Plant (sorry about that) and the start of the historic Whipstick area which we visit tomorrow.

Through Eaglehawk. Take the road back to Bendigo and turn right on to Mildura Rd.

Opposite the Gold Mines Hotel (1857) turn right to Victoria Quartz Hill - please park closely as room is limited.

When you've seen enough and perhaps sampled the brew in Gold Mines Hotel, drive further out along Mildura Rd. to the GOLDEN HILLS MOTEL.

Ann Caddy is our hostess here and your unit reservation is No. *12*

Dinner a la carte is available in the motel restaurant from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. or you can join in with a Dinner Dance at 8.00 p.m. at \$8.00 per head.

BENDIGO PIONEER RALLY: JUNE 11-13, 1977

PROGRAM - SUNDAY, June 12, 1977

Depart Golden Hills Motel at 9.15 a.m.

Travel to Bendigo. Watch out for 4 original hotels all built during the gold rush.

Whitehorse Hotel in Jobs Gully on right
Rose of Australia in Long Gully on right
Manchester Arms " " " on left
British and American " " " on right.

Turn right at fountain, follow tram route to CENTRAL DEBORAH MINE.

10.00 a.m. Inspect mine and buildings

10.30 a.m. Bendigo's famous Talking Tram will transport you to the TRAM MUSEUM for an inspection and the same tram will bring you back to the mine and your cars at 11.30 a.m.

No delay here please as we are due at the Captain Cook Hotel, Epsom for lunch at 12.00 noon.

2.00 p.m. Out of the pub into your car and head in strict convoy (don't stray or you'll get lost) out to the Whipstick area which you now know all about having read our potted history sheet and then to Hartlands Eucalyptus Distillery and Farm.

4.00 p.m. (Approx.) Leave the farm and travel either in convoy or if you can't keep up to an Alvis 12/50, at your leisure back through Bendigo and down Calder Highway to Harcourt.

As you leave Bendigo watch out for the Golden Square Fire Station on your right and go and see the water still flowing from the 3000 ft. workings of the Shamrock Mine which closed in 1911.

When you find the Homestead Motel, Harcourt, our hosts, Vera and Stephen Jeffrey will point out your reserved accommodation which is Unit No. **12**

There is an excellent restaurant in the motel with dinner starting at 6.00 p.m. and it is BYO.

While you are enjoying your coffee we'll tell you the answers to the Rally Quiz and give out prizes to the brainy few.

THE WHIPSTICK

Compiled by Ron Wilson

A few miles north of Bendigo is an area of some 60 square miles known as THE WHIPSTICK.

Today this is a little known area but because of the amount of gold taken from the ground by the thousands of diggers who came from all over Australia, it has a very firm place in our history.

The name is taken from a local species of Mallee Gum which is so tough and springy that it was used for whip handles or whip sticks.

The style of mining was peculiar to the area as it was not alluvial gold; but speck or nugget gold found on the surface or only a few feet beneath.

The geology is also peculiar as it is mainly a type of clay sprinkled with quartz and it was this treacherous clay that led to more fatal accidents than on other fields.

Because the forest at that time was dense and the stunted trees festooned with a parasitic creeper called DODDER LAUREL many miners exploring the area became lost and perished through hunger and thirst and legends abounded that the area was cursed and haunted. Even today a little imagination can turn the forest into an eerie place.

One of the earliest hotels on the diggings was the CAMP HOTEL built in 1862 on the then main road from Eaglehawk but now inaccessible except on foot.

The writer spent some time at "The Camp" in the 1930's when it was occupied by relatives who had emigrated to Australia by sailing ship and lived there until last year. The hotel licence had been surrendered in 1910 but until 1976, when the property was sold, the building was quite sound, in good repair and still contained all the original furnishings and fittings in perfect condition.

Strangely the great problem on the Whipstick was WATER as it was on the nearby main Bendigo field - the difference being that too much water closed all the Bendigo mines while a scarcity of water not only to wash the tailings, but to sustain life, finished the Whipstick. Three log dams were made in the forest, one of which remains operative today.

No records show the total gold won from the Whipstick field but we do know that between 1858 and 1864, no less than 89 nuggets - each over 20 ounces were found, the largest being 573 ounces found in a wheel rut 2 inches below the surface.

Truly a very rich field and who knows how much the miners left behind.

BENDIGO PIONEER RALLY : JUNE 11-13, 1977

PROGRAM - MONDAY, June 13, 1977

Depart Homestead Motel, Harcourt at 9.30 a.m.

Go up past Ray Rice's Shell Service Station at rear of motel.
Follow sealed road past Harcourt Rural School, turn at signpost
and follow gravel road to top.

Over the mount to the KOALA PARK and then down to highway.

Use CAUTION crossing highway.

On your right is the Faraday-Kidnap School and further on
Golden Point reservoir.

Then through Chewton into Castlemaine.

Here you are on your own to visit the Castlemaine Market, the
Castlemaine Gardens, the Burke Monument (at the top of
Lyttleton St.) or the Art Gallery and Museum.

At 12 noon (or before) assemble outside the Castlemaine Gardens
where we will meet some members of the CASTLEMAINE HISTORIC
VEHICLE CLUB.

After thrashing them on the superlative merits of Alvis we will
all go to the BULLBOAR AND YABBY RESTAURANT in the cellars of the
old Imperial Hotel - now classified by the National Trust, and
partake of a smorgasbord arranged by the local club, at 12.45 p.m.

Cost for this is \$3.00 adults, \$1.50 children and tickets must be
purchased from Ron Wilson. And it is BYO if you are so inclined.

After lunch and a natter you can head for home because that's the
end of this rally.

Hope you have enjoyed yourselves and thanks for coming.

Don't forget Queen's Birthday Weekend 1978 is the Alvis
Interstate Rally at Swan Hill.

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THE BENDIGO TRUST

VICTORIA HILL

Timeless aged rock formations and traces of famous gold mines make Victoria Hill a fascinating experience for the visitor to Bendigo who wants to get to grips with the city's rip-roaring gold mining past.

Only a mile or so from the city centre, just off the Calder Highway as it leaves for the north-west, Victoria Hill was described in 1871 as the richest quartz reef in the world.

On present day values, the half million ounces of gold known to have been won from the hill would be worth more than \$15,000,000. In the heyday of the deep quartz mines, four were on Victoria Hill, including the Victoria Quartz, in its day the deepest in the world (4163 feet).

And how did it all happen?

Following the discovery of gold on Bendigo Creek in 1851, successive waves of settlers fanned out over the district as new gold fields were discovered. By 1853, with much of the alluvial gold spent, enterprising miners found gold in the quartz reefs that outcropped on the hills and later that year the first quartz mine opened, ushering in 103 years of continuous reef mining. Until then, Victoria Hill had been neglected, rugged area, a hideout for bushrangers.

But, once gold was discovered in the hill in 1854, the ironbark forest was flattened as poppet legs and crushing batteries were set up.

One of the first to mine the hill was Christopher Ballerstedt a 58 year old emigrant from Prussia, who bought a claim on the hill, with his son Theodore, for \$80. Ballerstedt expanded the claim into shafts and a large open cut and with other claims he obtained gold worth nearly half a million dollars by 1860. Theodore used his part of the fortune to build a mansion he called "Fortuna". This home is still standing in Bendigo today with its luxuriant architecture and gardens, but is used by the Army and visits are restricted.

In 1871, Theodore had sold Fortuna to George Lansell, who later became famous as the city's "Quartz King". Theodore thought he had exhausted the riches from Victoria Hill and he sold his gold lease and battery to Lansell as well as the home. Within months, Lansell had taken gold worth \$360,000 from a reef on the 700 foot level.

This is just one of the many stories of fortune from Victoria Hill. In the last quarter of last century, half a dozen huge mines were working on Victoria Hill, drilling down thousands of feet into the earth, carving out the rich quartz and fighting the water table, which eventually helped bring about the downfall of many of Bendigo's mines.

Little remains of these mines and their massive machinery but the shallow surface workings of the early miners are still very much as they left them. And as the visitor traces the above ground remains, they can dwell on what is under their feet as well. The miners burrowed everywhere for gold and the hill underground has been likened to a rabbit warren. Nearly a mile below the hill remain tons of machinery, drills, rails, air pipes etc from the Victoria Quartz. For on the night of June 14, 1910 water broke into the mine and as the miners ran for safety water rose steadily up the shaft. Despite the efforts of men and machinery, the mine fought a losing battle with the water and although it continued for several years at higher levels, the Victoria Quartz closed in 1913.
