

Bendigo Pottery Demijohn

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Bendigo Pottery and the Goldrush period

Bendigo, the famous Victorian gold town, has had an interesting history. The town was named after nearby Bendigo Creek, but was changed to 'Sandhurst' in 1854 and was declared a city in 1871 (under that name). It was later voted (by the residents) to be changed back to Bendigo in 1891 (as noted in the *Bendigo Advertiser* newspaper on the 27th April 1891, page 2).

The first gold "rush" in the Bendigo area occurred in November 1851. In the decade that followed Bendigo prospered with the establishment of a local Fire Brigade, Municipal Council, Waterworks company, and a telegraph connection to Melbourne. Another significant development during this time was the establishment of Bendigo Pottery in 1858 by Scottish migrant George Duncan Guthrie, a perfect example of early goldfields industry, that is still in operation today. Guthrie identified the clay deposits around Bendigo as the perfect material for his designs which ranged from basic and utilitarian to fine design-work

As the Bendigo goldfields continued to prosper; the second half of the 19th Century saw continued growth in the town with wealthy patrons investing in their local community, buildings, parks and infrastructure. Additions included the Town Hall, a Bendigo – Melbourne railway, St Paul's Church, Alexandra Fountain, trams and a local telephone service, Law Courts, the Bendigo Art Gallery, and Rosalind Park Conservatory. As the town developed into a cultured city so too did Bendigo Pottery flourish and by the end of the 19th Century the company had become a key industry name and was exporting wares across Australia.