

All that gold  
mining was  
thirsty work.

# TANSWELL'S HOTEL

VICTORIA'S OPEN HERITAGE NO.4  
TANSWELL'S COMMERCIAL HOTEL, BEECHWORTH

# Tanswell's Commercial Hotel

## GOLDEN TIMES

Beechworth is a Gold Rush town, and Tanswell's Commercial Hotel is a Gold Rush pub. In the wake of the Rush, Beechworth became the administrative and legal centre for north-east Victoria, and an important coaching and trade stop on the route connecting Melbourne and Sydney.

All that gold mining was thirsty work: liquor licences were first granted in Beechworth in 1853 and by end of that year the town already boasted five pubs. The Commercial was one of the pubs erected that year. By 1874 Beechworth residents supported 61 licensed premises.

## THE TANSWELLS

**“Thomas Tanswell was the son of a convict, but rose to become a successful businessman and Beechworth Justice of the Peace.”**

Tanswell purchased the Commercial Hotel in April 1870, and renamed it Tanswell's Commercial Hotel. In 1873 he rebuilt the former humble timber pub as the grand, double-storey brick hotel you see now. The Tanswell family sold the Hotel in 1967 after almost a century in their ownership, but the name remained.

## COACHING AND STABLING

Crawford and Co., a large firm who resisted the Cobb and Co. coaching monopoly, occupied premises at the rear of the hotel. They specialised in coach building and stabling, and ran mail and passengers around the north-east of Victoria. In those days, a trip from Melbourne to Beechworth took over 24 hours by coach.

The current stables date from 1892, rebuilt after a fire and renowned as one of the largest outside of Melbourne. The National Trust leased the stables and coach house building between 1969 and 1988, to run their Carriage and Harness Museum.

## LEGEND

After its rebuilding in 1873, Tanswell's was the grandest hotel in town. The Governor of Victoria stayed here during his visit to the region in 1906, and local legend has it that Ned Kelly, a more notorious visitor, also patronised Tanswell's. True or not, Tanswell's liquid gold has certainly satisfied all sorts over its 150 years - gold miners, bushrangers, governors, Beechworth locals and visitors alike.



Front: THE FRONT BAR AT TANSWELL'S IN 1975. PHOTOGRAPHER: VIVA JILLIAN GIBB  
LA TROBE PICTURE COLLECTION, STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA  
Back: TANSWELL'S GRAND EXTERIOR TODAY. PHOTOGRAPHER: GAVIN HANSFORD  
TOURISM VICTORIA

**TANSWELL'S COMMERCIAL HOTEL**  
VICTORIAN HERITAGE REGISTER NUMBER H0351

40-44 FORD ST  
BEECHWORTH, 3747  
PH: 03 5728 1480  
VICROADS REF: 659 05

**ACCESSIBLE AS A BAR, FOR FOOD AND ACCOMMODATION**

This place is on the Victorian Heritage Register because it is an important part of our history.

The Register protects over 2,200 places and objects assessed as being important to Victoria for social, architectural, historical, scientific or educational reasons. Anybody can nominate a place for inclusion on the Register if they think it is of state-wide significance. The Heritage Council, an independent statutory authority, makes the final decision.

There are many other places on the Register that you can visit, and a number have brochures like this one. For more information, contact Heritage Victoria on (03) 9637 9475 or visit our website at: [www.heritage.vic.gov.au](http://www.heritage.vic.gov.au)

**This brochure was funded through the strategy *Victoria's Heritage: Strengthening our communities.***

Published by the Victorian Government  
Department of Sustainability and  
Environment Melbourne, August 2007

© The State of Victoria Department of  
Sustainability and Environment 2007

This publication is copyright. No part  
may be reproduced by any process  
except in accordance with the Copyright  
Act 1968.

Authorised by the Victorian Government,  
8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne

Printed by [insert printers name]

Printed on 100% Recycled paper  
ISBN 978-1-74152-847-3 (Hardcopy)  
ISBN 978-1-74152-841-1 (Internet)

**DISCLAIMER** This publication may  
be of assistance to you but the State  
of Victoria and its employees do not  
guarantee that the publication is  
without flaw of any kind or is wholly  
appropriate for your particular purpose  
and therefore disclaims all liability for  
any error, loss or other consequence  
which may arise from you relying on any  
information in this publication.