

Ingersoll-Rand AA.2 Air Compressor No.13557

Sovereign Hill's two-stage air compressor No 13557 was built sometime between 1905 (when the Ingersoll Rand Company was formed) and 1911 (when catalogues show these compressors to be fitted with barring gear, which the Sovereign Hill compressor lacks). From 1934 it almost certainly had a similar history to the Sovereign Hill 'John Donald' winder, which was at the Virginia South Extended mine in Bendigo until 1948 before going to the antimony mine at Costerfield.

The first newspaper mention of an Ingersoll-Rand air compressor in Victoria is at the New Nil [Desperandum] mine at Raywood which, in December 1910; ordered an I-R air compressor of the latest type, available in six weeks, to cost £560 under steam, and to be installed by P. Jorgenson & Sons.¹ The second was the Diamond Creek Company at Diamond Creek, north-west of Melbourne. In February 1911 the directors decided to purchase an I-R air compressor and seven drills.² The Catherine Reef United at Bendigo installed a new I-R air compressor in March 1911, capable of compressing 1603 cu.ft/min at a pressure of 100psi.³ The Hustlers Consols, also at Bendigo, installed a new I-R air compressor in October 1911.⁴ The Central Red White & Blue Company of Bendigo invited an I-R representative to an opening of its new plant in 1912, but it would seem that this particular I-R compressor was powered by a suction gas engine, (similar to a machine installed at the Golden Pyke, Eaglehawk, shortly afterwards, in 1913.⁵ By 1916, Ingersoll-Rand had an office in Melbourne and had appointed Cameron & Sutherland their agents at Bendigo.⁶

This list is probably by no means exhaustive since items of mining machine plant were not often reported on (unless they were an innovation) but indicates that the majority of the new I-R machines in the period 1905-1911 were at or near Bendigo. Millers (machinery merchants) operated a branch office at Bendigo so would be well-placed to deal in second-hand air compressors.

References

¹ *Bendigo Advertiser*, Monday 5 December 1910, page 2.

² *Punch Melbourne*, Thursday 2 February 1911, page 8

³ *Bendigo Advertiser*, Friday 31 March 1911, page 2.

⁴ *The Bendigo Independent*, Saturday 28 October 1911, page 2.

⁵ *Bendigo Advertiser*, Thursday 14 March 1912, page 3; *Bendigo Advertiser*, Wednesday 22 January 1913, page 2.

⁶ *The Bendigo Independent*, Friday 21 January 1916, page 4.