

Historical Happenings

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Casterton and District Historical Society Inc.



Another unidentified picture from the archives of the Museum. Is the person on the far right A.E. Smith?? We think it might be. Can anyone confirm or deny this? And who are the others? Can anyone tell us and give a date and place for this photograph?

Current Happenings

Victorian Government Gazettes: On Sunday 16th July, the the user groups of the Railway complex got together for a working bee. With the help of these groups the Society was able to move the Government Gazettes from the Town Hall to the museum. They are now in place and look like they belong. Many thanks to Apex, Lions, Rotary and the Garden Club for their help. It is much appreciated.

ABC Historical Talks: Casterton will no longer be presenting talks on a Monday morning due to ABC Victoria indicating that Casterton and Coleraine are beneath the “imaginary editorial boundary” of ABC Horsham, and that if we wish to remain on 594 AM we would need to reference the Wimmera district in our talks. Our local historian, Jim Kent, has withdrawn from the talks indicating that to reference the Wimmera in his talks just to stay on the air waves is unacceptable. The Society supports his views. The towns of Harrow, Balmoral and possibly Coleraine will continue.

Guest Speakers: At the June meeting we were able to hear from Ray Welsford from Warrnambool Family History Group about what they have available for research. This was an excellent talk and we are now wiser about what is available from this group. Many thanks for Ray coming to speak to us.

Pat Hein, from Mt. Gambier Heritage and History Society Inc. came to see us in July. Pat is a past Casterton local, having fame from the Bailey’s Rocks area; her ancestor was a Bailey and these rocks were named after him. Pat gave an overview of their organisation. We look forward to a trip to Mt. Gambier in the near future to explore their cemetery, which they look after.

Till next time,, Jan Lier

People of Casterton



William Shiels (1848 - 1904), by unknown engraver, 1892, courtesy of La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria. IAN01/03/92/17.

Part 2 - continued from last month.

He had been strongly criticized, as attorney-general, for not bringing charges of scandalous fraud against many of the boomers, but he insisted on Munro returning from London to face charges and in the last days of the ministry, after a series of cabinet meetings, brought to trial the directors of the Mercantile Bank. Almost his last action as premier was to provide a post for his impoverished mentor Pearson as secretary to the agent-general in London. On 18 January 1893 a vote of no confidence was carried and (Sir) James Patterson was given the hopeless task of government.

About 1893 a heart condition - aneurysm of the aorta - was diagnosed and for several years Shiels attended parliament irregularly. In September 1896 his symptoms were such that he believed he was on the point of dying.

Shiels always referred to himself as a liberal - but a liberal free trader had a hard row to hoe in Victorian politics. He was a standard traditional liberal in his fear of 'despotic power being lodged in the hands of any individual or any Government', in his aversion to 'mollycoddling' by the state and his zeal to protect the Chinese in Australia from tyranny. However, he approximated to the 'Continental anti-clerical Liberal' in his views on ecclesiasticism and divorce. He had a touch also of a more modern intellectual liberalism in his contempt for the 'caste of wealth', his fears of plutocracy, his distaste for the 'abominable snobbism' associated

with Government House and for the 'slobber' in J. A. Froude's *Oceania*. He rejoiced in the 'gloriously happy lot' of the working class and supported 'a wider distribution of wealth'; on his return from England in 1890 he was 'prouder than ever [of] the general affluence of all classes here' contrasted with the bitter struggle for existence of millions in Britain.

In 1893, sobered, he remarked: 'We are our brother's keeper, and the State ... owes a duty to those whom ... we have shut out from their natural opportunities'; his glad liberalism was getting away from *laissez-faire* and quoted Tolstoy's remark about doing anything to help the poor except getting off their backs. He had opposed 'one man, one vote' in 1888, but supported it throughout the 1890s as well as the female suffrage. Yet his final political flurry was of a pronouncedly conservative kind.

Regarded as a 'back number', Shiels surprised many when late in 1899, with other disaffected liberals, he worked closely with Allan McLean to overthrow the Turner ministry. 'Equal in all things' with McLean, he became treasurer for a year from 5 December, making a four-hour budget speech. The government produced little important legislation and was thrashed by Turner's Liberals at the November 1900 election.

Under pressure of severe drought and the Kyabram reform movement demanding basic economies, Turner's successor Sir Alexander Peacock foundered in June 1902. (Sir) William 'Iceberg' Irvine, whom Shiels had gathered for the McLean ministry, took office with Shiels as treasurer, minister of railways and chief confidant. He made his long budget speech sitting, fortified by a flask of whisky and a bottle of champagne: the government won a sweeping electoral victory on 1 October on the basis of drastic proposals for economy. It then easily forced through major salary-cuts and retrenchments for public servants, including railwaymen, and increased income taxation, thereby greatly strengthening State finances and preserving funds for development. It also reduced the number of members of both Houses, while foolishly confining public servants to separate electorates (repealed 1906), but failed to persuade the Legislative Council to accept any but cosmetic reform of its constitution or to allow female suffrage. Irvine and Shiels then ruthlessly

suppressed the desperate railways strike of May 1903. Shiels retired as treasurer on 21 July but remained minister of railways.

For much of the last year of his life Shiels was laid up with angina at Struan House, often in a wheelchair, often in agony. He left the ministry on 16 February 1904 (when Irvine also retired in ill health) and did not contest the June election. Survived by his wife, two daughters and a son, he died on 17 December 1904 and was buried at Struan House.

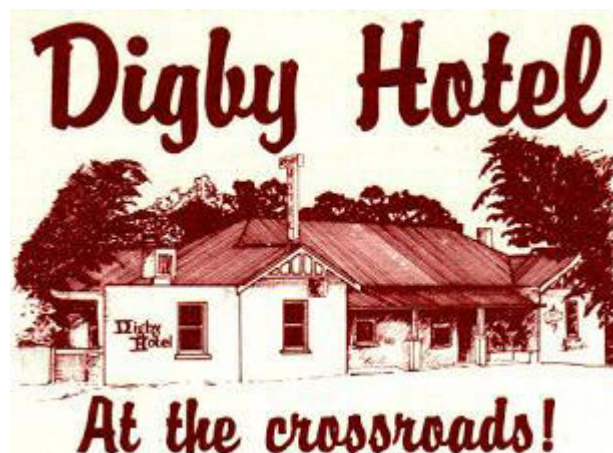
Shiels was tall, lean, prematurely bald and grey. Chivalrous, cordial, widely popular, he led an impeccable private and family life. His erratic political career never came to creative fruition, for he was premier and treasurer only in times of financial crisis. He is an interesting example of the intellectual in politics, comparable with Higinbotham, Pearson and Deakin. Eggleston considered him brilliant, with 'every intellectual gift, but ... no command of men ... a little too good and not quite strong enough for men who would never let him lead them'. Shiels's protégé Irvine must be allowed the last word. He was courageous, kindly and just; incomparable as a financier, he could make figures live and move before an audience.

Too proud to sue for any man's good opinion, he sometimes permitted a misunderstanding to continue ... when he could have removed it by a few words of explanation. If this was a fault, it was the fault of a lofty mind, impatient of mean motives and of suspicious natures. He had enemies, as was inevitable for such a man; but [he made] the most liberal of allowances for the conduct and attitudes of those most bitterly opposed to him.

Author: Geoffrey Serle

Print Publication Details: Geoffrey Serle, 'Shiels, William (1848 - 1904)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 11, Melbourne

We will be publishing an historical advertisement each month. Coupled with our article on Digby this month, an advert for the hotel appears in the next column.



The Changes in Time

Part 10, By Des Murphy

60 years ago the cattle industry was a small industry in Western Victoria, mainly heavy bullocks and chopper cows. Slowly the dairying industry was declining; in two areas - one the price of butter fat was slipping, two the price of pig meats was falling also.

The cattle industry has started to prosper for three reasons: the clearing of country, the heavy use of superphosphate and the use of better pasture species lifted the carrying capacity up to four times in most country.

The demand for beef was rising at home and overseas years ago. The Casterton Stock Agents started weaner cattle sales in a small way in 1955, gradually the numbers were rising and the quality was improving also.

In the start only white faced cattle were penned, later all breeds and sexes were penned.

In January 2004, the Casterton Agents yarded over 10,000 weaners, all were sold to strong competition, the buyers were from South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.

Every week the Casterton Agents send loads of fat cattle to the three markets; vealers, heifers, cows, steers, bullocks and bulls. Some bullocks are sold to abattoir direct on a weight and grade bases. Some 2 year old steers are sold too with two deck semi loads to New South Wales feed lots for fattening to the Sydney market.

Four store cattle sales are held annually and special sales of spring heifers are held in the autumn each year.

Casterton is the home of Good Cattle.

Digby, Victoria, Australia : Settlement & Timeline

The settlement of Digby in south western Victoria was established at a river crossing on the Stokes River (Emu Creek), on the Emu Creek Pastoral Run. It was one of the early settlements on the wagon route north from Portland Bay to the rich pastoral lands of the interior soon after the first permanent settlement of Portland Bay by the Henty Brothers in 1834. The Hentys took up the pastoral runs of "Merino Downs", "Sandford" and "Muntham" to the north of Digby in 1837.

According to Les Blake's book : "Place Names of Victoria", Digby, Victoria was named after the village of Digby in Lincolnshire, England. You can visit the Village of Digby website in Lincolnshire at - www.digbyvillage.co.uk.

Acknowledgment The source of many items of early information has been the booklet "Heritage" prepared for the "Back to Merino - Digby" celebrations in 1977 and now out of print.

1834 - The Henty Brothers establish the first permanent Victorian settlement at Portland Bay.

1836 - In August, 1836 Major Thomas Mitchell passed a few miles to the west of present day Digby as he explored down the Glenelg River and then onto Portland Bay where he meets and tells the Henty Brothers about the rich grazing lands to the north.

1837 - The Hentys take up land, which they later call "Merino Downs" to the north of what is to become Emu Creek (Digby). They also settled the adjoining Pastoral Runs of "Sandford" and "Muntham" in the same year with sheep first arriving at "Muntham" on 3 August 1837.

1839 - Duncan McRAE visited Port Phillip in December, 1839 from Van Diemen's Land. Then, in partnership with Alexander ROSE of "Cora Lynn", near Launceston, he shipped 800 sheep and supplies to Portland Bay in 1840 and took up land in the Wannon country, adjoining that occupied by the Hentys. He paid his licence before the Hentys and thus thought to have become the first legal squatter in the area.

1841 - "Glenorchy" Pastoral Run occupied by Duncan McRAE.

1842 - Donald McKENZIE along with his hut keeper Frederick EDINGE, killed by Aborigines at his station on the Emu Creek near Digby, Victoria in March 1842.

1843 - According to Noel Learmonth in his 1934 book "The Portland Bay Settlement"

"On Emu Creek, Richard LEWIS opened the Woolpack inn on July 1, 1843; it was on the creek bank below modern Digby. LEWIS is famous as the importer of the great thoroughbred jumper, King Alfred." Richard LEWIS who later bought "Rifle Downs" had the "Woolpack" Inn built at Emu Creek and it was comprised of 14 rooms, a kitchen, dairy and outhouses, a brick stable with 20 stalls, a permanent well in the front yard, three acres of land and a garden plus an attached store of four rooms and a 40 foot loft above. This inn was burnt down in 1887 and Mrs. SOUTHERN who held the licence was jailed for two years for deliberately burning it down, but she was later found to be innocent.

1844 - "Glenorchy" Pastoral Run occupied by Alexander ROSE from Van Diemen's Land and he held it until 1855.

1845 - "Glenlivet" Pastoral Run occupied by Duncan McRAE.

1845 - "Rifle Downs" Pastoral Run occupied by James CRAWFORD who died in August 1848.

1845 - "Pleasant Hills" Pastoral Run settled.

1846 - Ottey's Store the first store built in Digby at the foot of the hill on the main road close to Emu Creek.

1846 - Nathaniel BURGESS (Blacksmith) and family said to have moved from Portland and set up a Blacksmith business at Digby. Nathaniel and wife Mary BARRATT had arrived at Melbourne from London in 1841.

1847 - Digby consisted of an Inn, a blacksmith and a cluster of huts along the creek supposedly for protection against the Aborigines. Water for drinking, etc was carried with the use of a wooden yoke placed across the shoulders to carry two buckets.

1848 - James Henty mentions in his diary of 2 Oct 1848 - "We started on the road to the Bay [Portland Bay], calling at Emu Creek [Digby] where there is a little village and a good Inn kept by Rd. LEWIS."

1848 - James HAMILTON recalled as a ten year old from Bringalbert Station north of Casterton taking a dray load of wool through Digby to Portland. -

..... *Next day we got to the Emu Creek, where Digby is situated, and camped there for the night. Digby at that time had a public house, store, blacksmith's shop, and a few huts. We had to ford the creek there too. The hotel was kept by Richard LEWIS, who prospered so well that he bought the Rifle Downs station. While on a visit to England, he bought the celebrated blood stallion, King Alfred, the sire of many a grand steeplechaser, and one of the best horses ever brought to Victoria. He also brought a very fine stamp of a draught stallion, "Agronomer". Both these horses stood at Rifle Downs for a number of years. From Digby we made the Smoky River next day.....*

1859 - The first sitting of the Court of Petty Sessions held in Digby. The police station was believed to have been in Jim MABBITT's Store (Bert Guthridge's).

1859 - in September, 1859 Joseph JOYCE applied for and was granted a publican's license for the Wool Pack Inn with sureties being Hugh GLANCY of Rifle Ranges and Donald McCALLUM of Digby.

1860 - Digby was served by a post office, with mails to and from Portland by coach twice weekly, a court of petty sessions, in a new wooden building, a police station, two hotels, a Church of England School and a number of other dwellings. Digby had two police constables to control the rapidly growing population. With bullockies travelling through, the court house was never short of business, much of which was only of a minor nature. e.g.. one gentleman was charged with insulting behaviour in a public (the inn) and he was fined 10 shillings with one pound 17/6 costs.

1861 - Rev. Dr. Cusack Russell laid the foundation stone for St. John's Church of England in April of this year and by December the church was consecrated and opened for services.

1861 - Land sales in the Digby Courthouse netted the sum of 5000 pounds for the Crown.

1861 - Court Perseverance No 3319, Ancient Order of Forresters (AOF) was formed in Digby as a benefit court, in which doctors were paid by the court and sick pay for a member was at the rate of one pound per week. Chemists' charges were also covered and members received interment fees of 10 pounds on the death of a wife and 20 pounds on the death of a husband. The dispensation for this court was granted by executive

council bearing the date 4 Oct 1861.

1862 - ELDRIDGE & RICE were operating a steam saw mill at Digby.

1864 - The Digby Common School No 191 opened with an enrolment of 46 pupils. By December the number had risen to 59 with most of the students aged between 6 and 10, but 8 of them were under 4. The teachers Mr. & Mrs. Eastwood were paid one shilling per pupil.

1867 - The first entry in the marriage register of St. John's Church of England was for the wedding of William Harvey JACKSON and Jane CLIFFORD on 23 Sep 1867.

1868 - Mr. Tom BURGESS and Mr. HOWARTH set up a saw mill near Digby.

1868 - Digby Mechanics Institute and Library had land reserved for its construction by an order in council dated 10 Aug 1868. It was built soon after and has been operating continually ever since.

1869 - The first sitting of the Supreme Court to be held outside Melbourne was held at the Digby Court in 1869.

1870 - Due to a shift in population the Digby Court House Building which had been built in 1860 was moved to Merino at a cost of 155 pounds.

1871 - Benn's saw mill opened.

1871 - Joseph POVEY selected 97 acres at Teakettle Creek on the Digby - Dartmoor Road.

1873 - The Ancient Order of Foresters (AOF) Hall was built in 1873 at the cost of 244 pounds. It was the only public building of any size so most community activities were held in it. The "Band of Hope" used it as a meeting place at the monthly rental of 10 shillings. Dances were held there periodically and a free library was also operated. Private citizens were able to rent it for various functions.

1874 - Digby, with a population of 350, was served by a post office, two hotels, four stores (one of which was combined with the post office), an insurance agent, one school, a Forester's Lodge, a Band of Hope, a butcher, baker, blacksmith, wheelwright, carpenter (who was the undertaker), shoemaker, a combined butcher-baker, Mechanics Institute, and a town herdsman.

1874 - The Church of England Sunday School opened this year with 28 boys and 26 girls and Nathaniel R BURGESS as Superintendent and six

teachers assisting. It closed in 1935 through lack of pupils and teachers.

1875 - The Digby Wesleyan Church was established this year on the triangular corner of the Portland and Dartmoor Roads.

1878 - The new brick Digby State School No 2047 was constructed in 1878 on the site of the present school. The numbers continued to grow to a maximum of about 100 pupils. The school residence was built in 1890.

1880 - The vicarage of St. John's Church of England was built in the 1880s as a residence for Rev. MOODY.

1888 - Digby South School No 2876 was opened with the teacher being Mrs. HIGHLAND. Children walked up to 5 miles to and from school. Other teachers were Miss RIDDLE and Miss DRUMMOND and this school closed in 1898 through a lack of pupils.

1889 - The police station was shifted to Merino with Constable BROWN being the last policeman.

1917 - Digby World War 1 Avenue of Honour Tree planting ceremony.

1919, 26 Feb - Digby Show postponed due to Spanish Flu.

1991, 27 Jan - Digby World War 1 Avenue of Honour restoration, during which new bronze name plaques were located under each of the 97 trees in the Avenue of Honour

Woolpack Inn 1843 - 1887



According to Noel Learmonth in his 1934 book "The Portland Bay Settlement"...

"On Emu Creek, Richard LEWIS opened the Woolpack Inn on July 1, 1843; it was on the creek bank below modern Digby. LEWIS is famous as the importer of the great thoroughbred jumper, King Alfred." Richard LEWIS who later bought "Rifle Downs" had the "Woolpack" Inn built at Emu Creek and it was comprised of 14 rooms, a kitchen, dairy and outhouses, a brick stable with 20 stalls, a permanent well in the front yard, three acres of land and a garden plus an attached store of four rooms and a 40 foot loft above. This inn was burnt down in 1887 and Mrs SOUTHERN who held the licence was jailed for two years for deliberately burning it down, but she was later found to be innocent."



Kent's Radio Corner

As you may know, Jim Kent has been heard on the ABC radio recently, speaking about the history of Casterton. For those who have not been able to listen to the transmissions, here is a précis of them.

This will be the first part of a 2 part talk on transportation in the Casterton district.

This morning we will start with the part trains and railways played for almost 100 years of service to the township, and district of Casterton, and then on the next segment we will look back on animal and motor transport in this district.

After much agitation, petitioning, and lobbying politicians, eventually Casterton was granted access to the Victorian Railways system.

By the late 1870 the Victorian Railways had in place rail lines to Albury, Echuca, Geelong, Ballarat, and Ararat, It was only natural that primary producers, merchants and others from surrounding districts all clamoured to be connected to this new type of transportation. So much so, that spur lines began to snake out from lines - and the rail line to Casterton is just that - to tap into the system a rail line was constructed, to join the Ararat, Hamilton and Portland line at Branxholme, 40 miles away.

Not without extreme difficulty though; hilly terrain, numerous small water courses, 2 major rivers and deep cuttings, formed part of the problems encountered when construction was under way in the early 1880's.

It was noted that over the 40 miles from Casterton to Branxholme, there was, on average, a water crossing every 1½ miles and a culvert or bridge required at each one.

For the first 2 mile out of Casterton lengthy trestle bridges had to be built over the stream and flood plains of both the Wannon and Glenelg Rivers.

A bit further down the line the deepest cutting in the Victorian Rail system had to be excavated by men and horses.

However despite all these handicaps the rail line reached right into the embryo township of Casterton in the September of 1884, and had on its route 5 other stations or stopping points.

This achievement gave great opportunity for local

produce to be railed out and merchandise to be brought in. One enterprising local produce merchant chartered a special train to rail potatoes from Casterton to Sydney.

With the advent of the rail connection to Casterton, direct access to facilities at the port of Portland became available, plus also a direct link to the more major cities of Victoria for people desirous of visiting them and for the consignment of goods etc.

In the early days of the service there were 2 steam trains out and 2 in per day, hauling goods wagons and passenger carriages.

The Friday night train was eagerly awaited by the local picture theatre operator for it brought in the reels of film for the Saturday night showings at the 2 picture theatres, plus fish and ice-cream for the shops.

The out-ward mail bags were sent and the inward mails received per medium of the railways.

Quite a number of families gained their livelihood from employment in the various facets of the railway system.

As time marched on, steam trains gave way to diesel/electric power as the haulage unit.

The motor car made inroads on the passenger traffic; trucks eased considerable tonnage of both livestock and goods from the system.

High maintenance of the rail line was a deciding factor when a decision was made to close the line.

This historic occasion occurred on Friday February 4th 1977 when after 93 years if service, the last train departed Casterton rail head.



Above:

16th September, 1914.

Volunteers to the A.I.F. wave farewell from the train leaving Casterton.

***Helen Macpherson Schutt -
Philanthropist***
17th April 1874 - 19th April 1951

Extracts taken from a history of her life,
Conclusion

Helen's Landowner Forebears:
The Macphersons.

Helen was particularly fortunate in her forebears: on both sides they were hardworking and energetic. On the Macpherson side they were good judges of land and excellent farmers while the Smiths were entrepreneurs with a talent in business and blessed with an eye for property with potential.

Sheep farmer John Macpherson and Helen Watson, both from Skye, Inverness-shire in Scotland, who were to become Helen Schutt's grandparents, were married on May 22, 1825, just days before they set out for Australia. The marriage produced eleven children, the youngest of whom, Jane Priscilla, was the mother of Helen Macpherson Schutt.

The arrival of the 'Triton' was recorded in the 'Sydney Gazette', with John Macpherson's wife listed as Mrs Helen Watson', carrying on the long held highland custom of married women retaining their maiden names.

The Macpherson family moved to an area near Bathurst, New South Wales where John's father Peter Macpherson was given a Crown grant of 640 acres in the County of Cook by Sir Thomas Brisbane. The area is the location of the present day small town of Portland, New South Wales, northwest of Lithgow. Though John and Helen initially stayed with the family, in 1829 John made application for a grant of land near that of his father, in the Bathurst district.

Although John Macpherson had applied for land near Bathurst and as close as possible to that granted to his father, he received instead 640 acres at 'Canbery in the County of Murray' – now Canberra, Australia's national capital, which he took up in October, 1831.

John Macpherson was the first resident landholder in Canberra, and his wife Helen and their children the first white family to live in what is now the Australian Capital Territory. One of their children, also John, the first white boy born in Limestone Plains, grew up to become, briefly,

Premier of Victoria.

John Macpherson's ownership of this valuable land laid the foundation of the wealth passed down through the Macpherson family and eventually to Helen. Besides the newly-weds, the Macpherson party consisted of John's father, Peter Macpherson, his wife Catherine and their other children Peter, Duncan, Hugh, Annabella, Jane, Catherine and Margaret.

Although the romantic story that surrounds the acquisition of John Macpherson's land at Limestone Plains in 1831 says it was given for his part in the capture of a bushranger, nothing in the official records supports this claim. John named the property 'Springbank' and its homestead was on the high ground that today forms Springbank Island in Lake Burley Griffin.

The property was bounded on the east by land belonging to a Mr Campbell. John Macpherson's grant was opposed by Lt. Moore, a non-resident landholder, who had taken out a ticket-of-occupation for the land in 1824. On hearing of the Macpherson bid for the land, he wrote to Surveyor-General Hoddle in less than enthusiastic terms: "*I beg leave to inform you that I am desirous of retaining the 1,000 acres already in my possession. It is called and known by the name Canburry*".

Eventually it was agreed that Moore retain the ridge and the name 'Canburry' for his land, whilst the basin be shared with Macpherson. Quit rent was paid from January 1, 1839 and the Crown grant was finally issued on January 30, 1844 at an annual quit rent of five pounds, six shillings and eight pence 'for ever'. In this case, 'for ever' did not last long, as all freehold land was reclaimed for the establishment of the Australian Capital Territory in 1912.

Springbank had a variety of occupants until it was reclaimed by the Commonwealth Government in 1912, including serving two years as a school under James Abernethy. A Cambridge man and Duntroon tutor, a Mr Evans, occupied it for some time until its purchase by the Sullivans in the 1880s. Before the great drought of 1901, the largest and most successful dairy in the Queanbeyan district was on Springbank and Canberra's first Parliament House, opened in 1927, was situated 'a mile to the west' of Springbank and Yarralumla.

The old 'Springbank' area includes Acton, Fellows and Willows Ovals, the Australian National University, including the National Film and Sound Archive building, the Sir Roy Grounds designed Academy of Science, and also University House. The new National Museum of Australia is on Acton Peninsula, directly opposite Springbank Island.

While much of 'Springbank' was flooded when Lake Burley Griffin came into being, a small island carries the name of Springbank and yacht races are held around it today.

That the area of Canberra held great promise for the future was evident in the 1830s and not only to John Macpherson. Australia had to wait another 77 years before the prophesied 'fine town' came into being with Canberra as the choice for Australia's national capital.

'Splendid Land': The Western District

In 1839, seeking new pastures, John Macpherson moved to what was then known as the Port Phillip District of New South Wales (later Victoria), leasing his land in Canberra. On July 1st, 1840, his name appears in the Government Gazette as having a license to graze stock beyond the 'limits of location' of both the Melbourne and Geelong districts. In the same year, he also acquired 'two roods of land in the town of Portland' for the sum of £251.

In December, 1841, he took up 25,000 acres near Casterton, in Victoria's Western District which he named 'Springbank Station', the second time he had used the name Springbank. Near neighbours, the Hentys, arrived in the district in 1835, bringing with them the first merino sheep in the district.

The Hentys owned three properties close to 'Springbank Station': Sandford Estate (12,000 acres), 'Springbank' Muntham Estate, of 60,000 acres and Merino Downs, the family station of 14,000 acres.

Today, the Casterton property formerly known as 'Springbank Station' is reduced to 1,000 acres which includes the land where the original homestead stood.

Before John Macpherson bought the property, it was known as 'Cattle Station'.

John Macpherson also acquired property closer to Melbourne in 1847, buying two parcels of land in Moonee Ponds. The first parcel was 90 acres, for

which he paid £432 and the second 29 acres, for which he paid £87.

The Western District property most closely linked to the Macpherson name is 'Nerrin Nerrin', said to be an Aboriginal name, meaning 'many waters'. The lakes within its boundaries are Lake Oonah, Lake Challicum, Lake Nerrin and Lake Macpherson. The historian Alexander Henderson writes that 'Nerrin Nerrin' was taken up by John Macpherson in August, 1846 and consisted of 52,027 acres of 'splendid land', which, after improvements, could carry 40,000 sheep. It extended from Streatham along Fiery Creek for thirteen miles to Lake Bolac, eventually became freehold and with additional purchases of land, its area increased to 62,000 acres, said to be the largest freehold station in Victoria at the time.

Michael Cannon, in *'Australia in the Victorian Age: 2'* lists the Macphersons as one of the seventeen Victorian families (among them the Armytages, Chirnsides, Clarkes, Manifolds, Moffatts, Robertsons and Russells) that, by 1893, owned a total of two million acres of Victoria's 'best freehold land'

John Macpherson's third son, William Duncan, lived at 'Nerrin Nerrin' for 45 years, firstly as manager and later as managing trustee. 'Nerrin Nerrin' and its lakes were famous for their game. After 'Nerrin Nerrin', John Macpherson acquired two more properties, Croxton, at nearby Penshurst which extended from Lake Linlithgow to the vicinity of Mount Pierrepont was south-east of Hamilton to the south of Mount Sturgeon. The area of Croxton was 14,727 acres and although it was subdivided after Macpherson's death, the family retained an interest in it until 1910.

Macpherson also owned 'The Wilderness', a subdivision of Koonong Wootong run in the Portland Bay district, which he held for four years from February, 1864 until March, 1868, before its sale to Mr Charles Rowe. Including leasehold, 'The Wilderness' was 57,000 acres and carried 25,000 sheep and 50 cattle.

Matriarch Helen Macpherson (nee Watson) died at Nicholson Street, Fitzroy on May 18th, 1872, aged 67 years.

John Macpherson died in Melbourne on April 9, 1875, aged 77.

***Society Meeting Times and Dates,
With Guest Speakers for 2006/7:***

Meetings held at the R.S.L. Rooms
Henty Street, Casterton.

Monday 21st August 2006 at 2.00 pm

Ms. Jenny Fawcett - Genseek Genealogy

Wednesday 20th September 2006 at 7.00 pm

Basil Stafford, Local/Family History Researching

Wednesday 18th October 2006 at 7.00 pm

Ross Davidson, Talk on Quarry at Wando Vale

Sunday 22nd, Visit to Quarry with Ross Davidson

Wednesday 15th November 2006 at 7.00 pm

Dinner Meeting - **Ms. Joan Hunt**

December 2006 and January 2007 - No Meeting

Reminder

**Vern McCallum Photographic Exhibition
At the Digby Hall
Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th August
*Bring those old photos!!***

General Meetings of the Casterton and District
Historical Society will be held at 2.00 p.m. in
June, July and August

President: Jan Lier

Publicity Officer: Basil Stafford

Secretary/Treasurer: Cheryl Elmes

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Cheryl Elmes and Jim Kent

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Any material for inclusion can be left at
P.O. Box 48 or passed to Basil Stafford or Jan Lier.

Any ideas or comments always welcome
at P.O Box 186

You can email Jan and Cheryl
via the Ballarat Genealogy Web site.

Publications for Sale

Casterton Historical Street Walk
"From Flour Mill to Glenelg Inn - \$10.00

Extracts from the Casterton and District Historical
Society Inc. 1966-1996 - \$10.00

Corndale State School Honour Board Booklet \$7.00

Casterton Cenotaph WWI soldiers - \$20.00

Casterton Cenotaph WWII soldiers - \$10.00

Major Norman McDonald

Photograph Album CD - \$20.00

History in the Depths – Gallipoli – DVD - \$20.00

Vern McCallum Photographs CDs

Casterton High School - \$20.00

Vintage Tools of Trade - \$10.00

Newsletters of the Casterton and District Historical
Society 2005 Booklet – Indexed \$10.00

Extracts from Gleanings – \$1.00

Contact Jan 55 752578



Historical Society
Presentations to
ABC Horsham

August 7th 2006 Balmoral

August 14th 2006

August 21st 2006 Coleraine

August 28th 2006 Harrow

September 4th 2006 Balmoral

September 11th 2006

September 18th 2006 Coleraine

September 25th 2006 Harrow

Note: Casterton will no longer be participating in
Historical Talks as from August.

Harrow, Balmoral and possibly Coleraine will
continue until November when the Talks will
conclude.