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Historical Happenings

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Casterton and District Historical Society Inc.

Albion Hotel 100th Anniversary Special



The 19th May 2007 marks the 100th Anniversary of the opening of the present building on the hotel site. The whole of this month's issue of Historical Happenings is given over to the history of this hotel and the Grant family. The Casterton and District Historical Society is holding a dinner at the hotel on the 19th May 2007 to mark the occasion.

A specially bound copy, with photographs printed on photographic paper, will be presented to Mark and Michelle Hutchesson, present licensees of the Albion and to Mr. David and Mrs. Joan Grant. Any one wishing to have a bound copy can apply, price \$10.00. Copies of the newsletter printed on archive paper will be available on request, price \$2.50. A4 size copies of the larger photographs featured in the newsletter are available, price \$15.00.

We wish the Grant family all the very best on this special occasion.

The Grants - A Short History

John Scott Grant - son of James Grant & Helen Scott McGregor - and Ann Kilpatrick were married in Edinburgh, Scotland on the 14th May 1841. Two weeks later on the 4th June 1841 they sailed from Greenock (near Glasgow) for Port Phillip with another 196 persons (crew included) on the "India" which was making its second voyage. On the 20th July when they were approximately 500 miles off the coast of Brazil (16 degrees Latitude and 33 degree Longitude) a fire on board caused the ship to sink with the loss of eighteen lives. The comparatively small loss of life was due to the accidental fire starting in daylight in a calm sea within sight of a French whaler named 'Roland'. The survivors, having lost all their possessions - including most of the clothing they were wearing due to the fire - were taken to Rio De Janerio. After assistance from the British Embassy they were put of a smaller ship 'The Grindlay' and completed the journey to Port Phillip.

After arriving at Port Phillip they travelled by wagon to Konong Wootong where they worked for the Whyte Brothers at Konong Wootong (Coleraine) as a station hand. The exact movements of the family are not known but it is known that at some time John Grant

worked for Francis Henty at Merino Downs.

The first son James' birth was registered at Portland in 1842. This child died at a very young age and it is believed that the child wandered away into the bush and perished as a result of an incident with an aboriginal tribe and the child's mother. The family story is that the mother was terrified and the child wandered away probably following the aboriginals into the bush. Some remains of the child were apparently found six months later. There is no death certificate and the story is not able to be confirmed but John and Ann had another son in 1855 and named him James.

The family moved onto a farm at Mosquito Plains (Naracoorte) South Australia. John then went to the Gold Rush at Ballarat and apparently he had some success. As a result of his success we was able to sell the property at Mosquito Plains about 1853 and bought the Woodford Inn at Dartmoor which he operated for about three years. He then shifted to Sandford in 1856 where the Caledonian Union Hotel was built. He apparently paid £70.00 for the land on which the hotel was built. He operated the Caledonian Union Hotel at Sandford until the time of his death. It was a two story hotel and after a fire it was converted to a single storey hotel. The hotel is still in the family to this day but is no longer operating as a hotel.

There is a possibility that he also operated a hotel on the Casterton to Portland road just north west of Merino before the main Casterton Portland Road ran through the town of Merino. Mention of the Grant family operating a hotel in this location is made in a publication called the 'Marks of Time'. Quote:- "Mr. Richard Edwards, who died in 1959, aged 89 years, said that at one time a hotel was located on Dwyers Creek, at the present site of Mr. Rhodes sheepyards. This was owned by the Grant Family (Mr. Rhodes place is known as Grantlea), who later moved to Sandford and eventually to Casterton where a hotel is still called Grants."

This was one of three hotels which were known as the Henty Hotels - The others were known as the "Mocamboro Inn" and the "Junction Hotel". The Junction Hotel was the last hotel to close just after the First World War; closed by a Mr. D. C. Smith on the instructions of Miss Louisa Henty who did not like the men spending so much time there drinking instead of coming to work.

John was a member of the Forresters Lodge and this Lodge used to meet in the Caledonian Union Hotel at Sandford until a drunken member broke a chair one night and John threw them all out.

He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge at Penola in South Australia and joined on 6th August 1873. His eldest son Robert had joined the Lodge there two years earlier. There were two other Grants from Penola who were members of the same Lodge who joined about the same time, John Grant in December 1871 and Richard Grant in 1874. These Grants were believed to be connected with the Prince of Wales Hotel in Penola. Whether they are related to John Scott Grant and his family is not able to be established and the connection may be that they were neighbouring publicans.

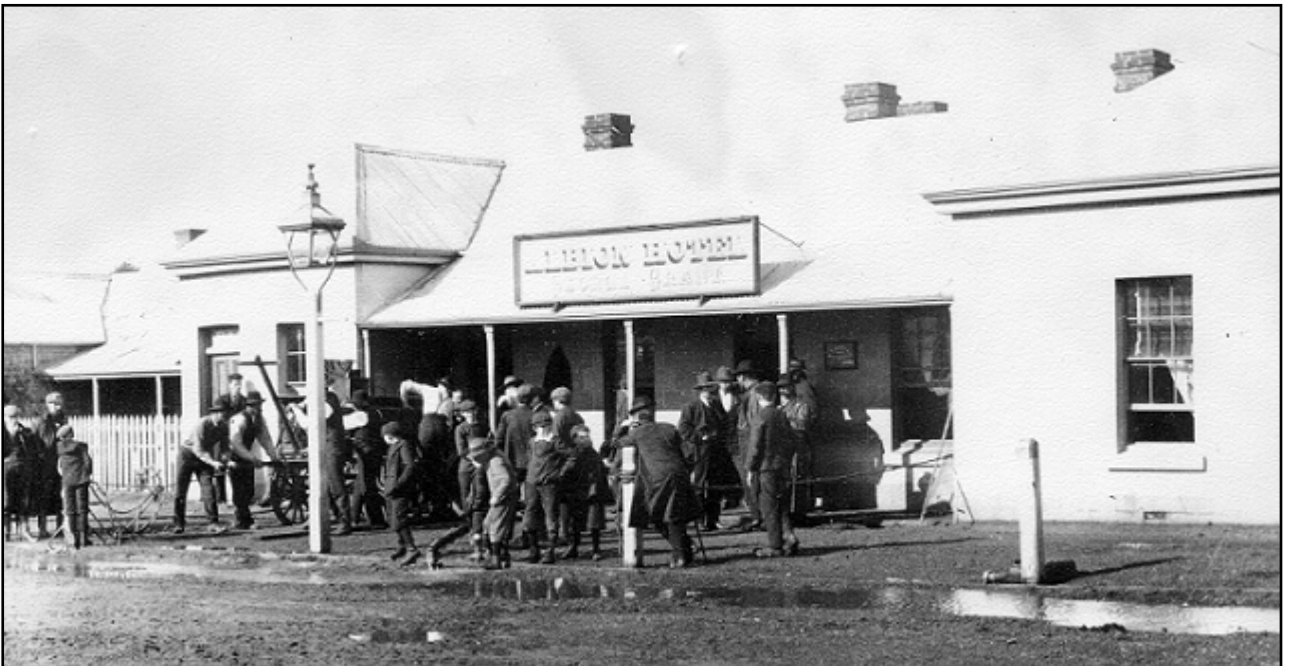
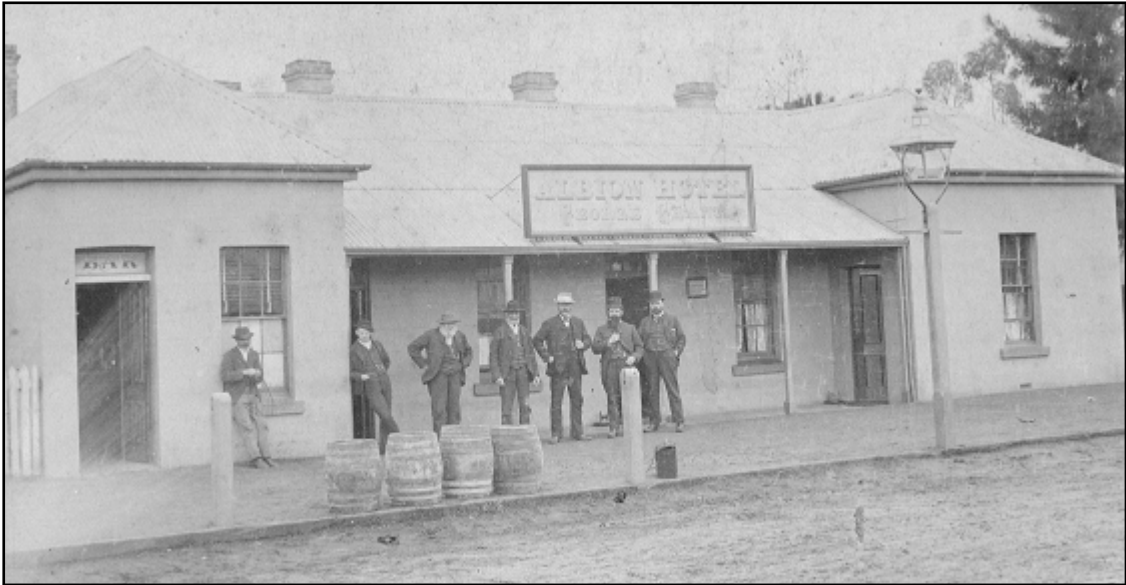
John and Ann GRANT had nine children and few details of birth and death registrations were attended to for members of the family. Three children died at early ages, James, Allen and John. The names James and John were re issued to later children.

Robert & George Grant, sons of John Scott Grant.

The original Albion Hotel was constructed in 1865 by Robert Grant and his younger brother, George. The building was a simple, single-storey of solid brick manufacture, which featured the same wonderful symmetry of design featured by the present building.

Robert and George were sons of John Scott Grant who built the Caledonian Union Hotel at Sandford in 1857. Apparently, Robert held the Albion Hotel licence while George worked on farms during the day, returning to work at the hotel during the evening. George also operated a pair of bullock teams, carting materials between Casterton and Portland. This was at a time when a bullock team was an extremely valuable asset, and vital to the commerce of a district. George drove one of the teams, the other being operated by "Jack the Pointer", a colourful character of the times, whose reputation was known widely.

The Albion Hotel was a popular venue for many club and committee meetings held in Casterton, and many of the present, and now defunct organisations of the town, held their inaugural meetings on the premises.
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The Albion Stables, situated at the rear of the hotel, were managed by many well-known local celebrities over the years, the most significant of whom was Morris Edwards. Edwards was a pioneer of Australia Felix, who was renowned for his ability and expertise with horses. Around 1915, COXON Brothers took over the Albion Stables. Several years later, they switched their allegiance from horse to car, establishing a business that is still in existence. The Albion Stables were not demolished until the 1970's.

George Grant eventually purchased his brother's interest in the Albion Hotel, and leased the premises to Frank Lyons. Lyons conducted the hotel for about three years, after which George regained the licence and conducted the hotel himself.

The devastating flood of 1906 forced a number of changes in Casterton. One of the most significant of these was the decision by the Grant family to demolish the Albion Hotel and replace it with a far grander building. Erected on the site occupied by the original hotel, the present Albion Hotel was opened in 1907. With its striking Elizabethan architecture and massive size, it was regarded as a show piece in Western Victoria.

George Grant died in 1923, and his son George Scott Grant, took over the hotel licence. Following his death in 1939, the Albion Hotel was conducted by his daughters, Joyce and Tup, and his son, Tom.

It is only in relatively recent times that the Albion Hotel has passed from the hands of the Grant family.

Source : "Graphic Glenelg Shire" - Graeme Lawrence and Charlotte Davis

Article supplied by David Grant.

What the Papers Say

Much can be gleaned from the obituaries - so we have looked at the Casterton news from 1923 and the Merino Recorder from 1939 to learn more about the Grant family. We think it makes fascinating reading so we are reproducing the obituaries for Mr. George Grant and his son, George Scott Grant.

From the Casterton News - 4th June 1923

PASSED AWAY

Mr. GEORGE GRANT.

Shortly after 5 o'clock on Thursday afternoon, Mr. George Grant breathed his last at his house in Clarke Street, Casterton, his age being 75 years. Had he lived till November, he would have been 76. For some months past it has been apparent that the health of the old gentleman was failing, though he was generally able to get about and even on Monday evening he superintended the drafting of some cattle in his paddocks, his life being thus marked by activity till almost its closing hours.

He was the second son of Mr. and Mrs. John Scott Grant, both of whom were natives of Edinburgh. Shortly after their marriage they left for Australia in June 1841 in the barque "India" of Greenock. They were not destined to reach Australia in that vessel however, as they had a most stirring and exciting voyage; the vessel taking fire and being consumed on the high seas. With the other passengers and crew they were rescued by a whaling vessel and landed at Rio de Janeiro where they remained for a month. They then boarded another ship and eventually landed at Port Phillip Bay in November, 1841.

They had been engaged to take up work as a married couple at Konong-wootong and without delay they set out from Melbourne, travelling by means of a bullock team, a marked contrast to the comforts of today with our railway service, despised though it may be by many. Mr. and Mrs. Grant removed from Konong-wootong to Portland and from there to Donaldson's station at Harrow, where George was born, his elder brother Robert having been born at Portland two years previously. At different periods they lived at Merion Downs, Mosquito Plains (South Australia) and Dartmoor.

Whilst at Merino Downs, Mrs. Grant had the supervising of the arrangements for the Vice-Regal visit of Governor Latrobe and Sir John and Lady Franklin and proved a great help to Mrs. Henty, the hostess of the distinguished visitors.

After leaving Dartmoor in 1857, the family settled at Sandford where Mr. Grant built the Caledonian Union Hotel, a two-storey building on the site of the home now occupied by Mr. John Little, who



is a brother-in-law of the deceased. The hotel that was built in 1857 was destroyed by fire and the present building was then erected.

George, on the arrival of the family at Sandford, was ten years of age and he spent some of his school days at Sandford. After leaving school he followed what occupations were available and in 1865, with his brother Robert, he built the Albion Hotel, which was conducted by the brothers as a partnership, the licence being held by Robert, while George used to work on the farms in the day time, returning to the hotel at night. Casterton has been his home ever since.

For a period he established himself as a carrier between Casterton and Portland, having two bullock teams on the roads. At that time a bullock team was worth as much as some of the surrounding stations. The deceased drove one of the teams and employed a notable character named, "Jack the Pointer" to drive the other.

After some years he purchased his brother's interests in the Albion Hotel and leased the premises to Mr. Frank Lyons who conducted the hotel for about three years, after which Mr. Grant took the licence and conducted the hotel himself and has always been looked upon as an ideal landlord; one who sought to give service in every respect and who considered the interests of his customers before his own. He was an excellent penman and on one occasion took one of the clerks in a Portland store to task for what he considered an impertinent remark. Mr. Grant had signed for some goods and the clerk in an innocent enough manner remarked, "You write well for a bullocky." Mr. Grant's withering reply was, "And why shouldn't a bullocky write as well as you clerks?"

The deceased was three times married. In 1871, he married Miss Mary Davis, sister of the late Mr. James Davis, who resided in Casterton for many years and Mrs Robert Jeffreys of Casterton. of this marriage there are six surviving children, two having died in infancy. They are as follows:- John R. of Tahara West; George Scott (the present owner of the Albion Hotel); Edith (Mrs. R. Graham, Ballarat); Amy (Mrs. J. Anderson Casterton); and Nurse May Grant who served through the war as a nursing sister and at present is conducting a private hospital in Melbourne. At the birth of the latter, Mrs. Grant unfortunately passed away leaving Mr. Grant with a young

family. He cherished the children and all have grown up with credit to their up-bringing.

Some years later the deceased married Miss Louisa Jeffreys, a sister of the Jeffreys family in Casterton. Of that marriage there are four children as follows:- Dr. Alex Grant of Auckland; James of the National Bank, Melbourne; Miss Mona of Casterton; and Eric of the Bank of Victoria, Kyabram. These three sons each saw service abroad with the A.L.F.

Later, Mr. Grant was once more left a widower and some years later he married Miss Ireland of Port Fairy, who, with the family is left to mourn a great loss and like the other members of the family is most highly esteemed.

As a citizen, Mr. George Grant, without any effort to gain popularity, has enshrined his name in the hearts of all who knew him and it is safe to say that no death could more deeply regretted than his. He took a keen interest in Freemasonry and some years ago celebrated the jubilee of his membership. He first joined the St. George's Lodge, Merino, while residing in Sandford and in later years took a leading hand in the formation of the Glenelg Lodge, of which he was twice elected Worshipful Master, the years being 1891 and 1892. He was looked up to by all the members as a brother of sterling character and high attainments. He was further honoured by being made a Grand Lodge Officer, P.G.S.D and in his Masonic career he set up a high standard for the brethren. On the attainment of his jubilee as a Mason, the brethren of the Glenelg Lodge presented him with an illuminated address which was greatly prized by him.

The funeral took place on Saturday afternoon and was largely attended by town and district residents. His remains were laid to rest in the Sandford cemetery, where his father was buried some 40 years ago and his mother some 20 years later.

The service of the Presbyterian Church was conducted by the Rev. J.G. Searfe. A large number of brethren of the Glenelg and sister Lodges were in attendance and the impressive Masonic burial service was conducted by Worshipful Brother D.V. West, P.D.G.D.C., assisted by Worshipful Brother G.K. Veitch, P.D.G.D. The mortuary arrangements were carried out by Mr. W.J. Peden.

From the Merino Chronicle 18th May 1939

Passed Away

George S Grant

News of the death of George Scott Grant, proprietor and licensee of the Albion Hotel Casterton will be learned with deep regret and with a measure of surprise as it was only his relatives and immediate friends who were aware that he was seriously ill. He had been in his usual health and attended the Sandford Races on the 6th inst. but took ill a few days later and despite the most attentive medical and nursing attention he gradually failed and death ensued at 6 o'clock last night.

He was 63 years of age on the 27th of January last and had spent the whole of his life in Casterton, with the exception of about 12 months spent in Mildura. He took over the Albion Hotel on the retirement of his father and for many years conducted same as an exceptionally high standard. The hotel being known far and wide as one of the best conducted throughout the state.

Deceased was keenly interested in racing and other sport and was an outstanding figure being one of the best known men of the Western District.

Though of a quiet and retiring nature with his wife he was a strong supporter of many movements for the benefit of the town and district.

He was for many years a member of the Glenelg Lodge of Freemasons and held the office of Worshipful Master in 1906 and 07.

Calendar of Events

May 19th - Annual Dinner - Albion Hotel - 100th anniversary of current building.

May 27th - Field Trip to Brimboal, Wando and Powers Creek - Identification of former State School sites project.

July 16th - AGM, RSL Rooms, Casterton, 2 pm
Guest speaker TBC

August 20th - General Meeting 2 pm Merino Hotel.
Guest speaker will be member of the Merino Progress association.

August 25th and 26th - Vern McCallum Historic Photographic Exhibition at Digby.

September 23rd - Field trip to Henty, Wurt Wurt Koort, Merino Downs, Glenorchy and Merino - Identification of former State School sites project.

October 21st - Field trip to Grassdale, Paschendale and Tahara - Identification of former State School sites project.

November - Saturday 10th - Casterton Pastoral and Agricultural Society. Vern McCallum Photographic Exhibition and "Best Photograph of an Historic Building in Casterton and District" entry in the indoor section of the P&A schedule.

November 21st - End of year dinner - Venue to be confirmed - 7 pm - Guest Speaker TBC



***Society Meeting Times and Dates,
With Guest Speakers for 2007:***

(guest speakers have not yet been finalised)

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

Wednesday 16th May 2007 at 7.00 pm

Monday 18th June 2007 at 2.00 pm

Monday 16th July 2007 at 2.00 pm (AGM)

Monday 20th August 2007 at 2.00 pm
(* at the Merino Hotel *)

Guest Speaker from the Merino Progress Assoc.

Wednesday 19th September at 7.00 pm

Wednesday 17th October at 7.00 pm

Wednesday 21st November at 7.00 pm

December 2006 - No Meeting

January 2007 - No Meeting

Wednesday 20th February 2008

Wednesday 19th March 2008

Reminder

Meetings in June, July and August are at 2.00 pm
on Monday.

President: Jan Lier

Publicity Officer: Basil Stafford

Secretary: Cheryl Elmes

Treasurer: Patricia Pitkin

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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 (03) 5581 - 2743 (note change of
number)

Do You Know?.....

The Historical Society does not have any details
of the pictures printed in this edition of the news.
If anyone has dates for the pictures, and / or can
provide names of the people contained in the
pictures we would be very grateful to receive the
information.

Thank You

To all those who supported the Newsletter in
April by finding a dollar donation. It is much
appreciated. Indeed, the receipts suggest that
some people put in more than a dollar! So to all
those and every body else, thank you very much.