

Casterton and District Historical Society Inc Newsletter

March 2010

Items in our newsletter:

The Roll Call at Merino Downs by Jack Cleary of Sandford page 1-3 History article prize page 3

<u>Next Meeting of the</u> <u>Historical Society</u>

Saturday 13th March

Annual Dinner:

"Beneath the Dardanelles"

Guest speakers and coauthors John & Hatice Basarin. Albion Hotel – 6.30pm for 7pm 2 course Dinner and Presentation - \$20.00 per person.

RSVP: 1st March ASAP Contact Ros Coventry 5581 2875 or roscov@iprimus.com.au Jan Lier – 5579 1301 or jlier3@bigpond.com



Casterton Community Museum

The Roll Call at Merino Downs by Jack Cleary of Sandford

The setting for the following poem was written by my father, Jack Cleary, who was at Merino Downs about 1900. Merino Downs was then administered by the family of Francis Henty, who had passed on some years earlier. In 1908 the property was divided into three properties called Merino Downs, Talisker and Wurt Wurt Koort.

The shearing of the sheep until then had been conducted by hand shears known as "the blades". Sheep were washed prior to shearing at a series of dams and enclosures in a gully east of the Mocamboro Road. The Roll Call was conducted on the first morning to see if all men had arrived who had been invited from the previous year had applied personally or by other contact. It is not known if the author worked at the property but he would have known many of the men named.

John L. Cleary

The Roll Call at Merino Downs

Now the shearers and the shed hands from Western District towns had all rolled up at Sandford enroute for Merino Downs.

There were some astride of horses and some who did it grand in rabbit carts and old pushbikes and Jile's four-in-hand.

So at last they got together at the shed long waited for

Page 2 of 3

Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project



Held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday from 10 am to 12 noon We only have 2 more rows to go in the C of E Section. Almost there!





There were Nash, Bob Meade and Barker who had all shorn there before. Also Black, Moore, Baker, Heart, Murtagh and McPhee had all shorn there in previous years and suited to a Tee.

Historical Happenings 🔊

There were more locals I could name they were all along the board had all their twenty first years there and broken some good records.

So the roll was called at Merino Downs on October the twenty sixth the rep and cook were voted in and everything was fixed.

So on that night the rain set in which made each shearer frown you can guess the looks on some of them after three weeks sitting down.

The weather brightened up a bit the clouds looked high and light some restless shearers could be heard upon their beat all night.

The time then came, the whistle blew the wheels commenced to turn each shearer made a start his weeks board to earn.

Now Bob Meade with splendid style had let the first sheep go while Bill Nash was on his wheel with a good old New South blow.

And the days rolled by and by until a week had passed. The shearers who felt tired and sore had settled down at last.

Then each one with a bloody rush the choice grill chops to get with a rouseabout well out in front is a certain bloody bet.

Page of 3

Casterton Community Museum

Our Address PO Box 48 Casterton 3311 Phone: 0432 774314

E-Mail: jlier3@bigpond.com roscov@iprimus.com.au



First meeting of 2010 - a sausage sizzle BBQ at the VIC was very enjoyable -"should be more of 'em like this", the unanimous opinion...

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Jan Lier for further information: Ph. 0432 774314 or jlier3@bigpond.com or contact Ros on roscov@iprimus.com.au or telephone 5581 2875

We're on the Web!

Visit us at: www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au /casterton/historicalsociety On Sunday morning all is still and the toilers take it easy until Jack Harrison's voice opening up their most respectful greasy.

He hums a bar of Home Sweet Home Swannee River and Killarney and if that doesn't wake them up he runs off tons of Blarney.

And this is the way the time flies by in most of those shearing sheds theres's always a game of two-up on and always a mob of heads.

So they meet once more in old Sandford town and they drink each others health but they seldom line their pockets yet are never short of dough.

SHORT HISTORY PRIZE: \$1000

Prahran Mechanics Institute invites you to participate in the prize for 2010.

TOPIC: a history of a place or as aspect of a place in Victoria written by a member or members of a Victorian Historical Society.

Entries must be:

- non fiction, complete and previously unpublished (or only t\by the historical group),
- up to 1500 words, plus images, maps, etc, accompanied by source notes, including illustrations, with an entry form, typed or printed on one side of A4 pages and fastened or bound.

Entries will be judged by a panel of historians. The PMI reserves the right to publish the winning entry in its newsletter and website. Information and entry forms are available online at:

http://www.pmi,net,au/events.htm#prize

PRIZE: \$1000 (\$500 for the author and \$500 for the associated history group)

Entries to be posted to: PMI Short History Prize, PO Box 1080, Windsor, Vic 3181 by Friday 27th August 2010 Further enquiries to Tim on 9510 3393