

# Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

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## What's on in May

**16<sup>th</sup> May**

### **Field Trip to the South East Family History Group.**

Visiting Penola & Millicent  
historic sites.

Meet at railway station at  
10am

BYO Morning Tea, Lunch &  
Afternoon Tea

**19<sup>th</sup> May**

**General Meeting** – RSL  
rooms, Casterton 2.00pm  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month

### **Mount Gambier History Group**

**25<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations  
Sat and Sun 1st-2nd May  
10am-4pm**

Military collection, photographic  
displays, veteran and vintage car club  
display, philatelic rooms open,  
antique evaluations(Sunday 2-4 only)

Reidy Park Centre , O'Halloran Tce  
\$5.00 entry per person

## The Light on the Hill at Casterton by Jim Kent

No, this is not another version of the popular song about the lights on the hill as sung by the late and great Slim Dusty. Rather it is, I hope, an enlightenment for those of you who may ponder how such an icon came to be placed on the side of the hill we refer to under various titles such as Shell Spirit Hill, Toorak Hill and Blueberry Hill.

Probably, unknown to me, there are or have been other titles directed toward this large hill. The purpose of this writing is directed toward that massive ornament that fascinates visitors to our town when they first observe it in all its glory, of a dark night.

So effective as an object is this icon it has become synonymous to our township, and is commonly copied on the mastheads of correspondence and in commercial situation.

Yes, I am referring to what some call the Fleur de Lis, or Lys, or the Prince of Wales feathers, or the Scout Emblem, or the Heraldic Lily or the Royal Arms of France. Choose your own title, but for me it is the Scout Emblem, and most assuredly a Casterton icon.

And this is how it came about – read on, my dear readers and like this Casterton icon of a night-time you will be enlightened.

Acting under instructions of the Scout Masters, Jack Peart and Eric O'Connell, the local scout group dug out this outline of their emblem, technically assisted by the girl guides, in the year of 1934 to celebrate Empire Day.

Each year following they would laboriously light up this emblem on Empire evening using tins filled with inflammable rags place in the outline. Cr Tom Howlett is credited with the idea of electric illumination of the outline following the SEC bringing electric supply to nearly Moodie Street.





**Visitor Information  
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**Please contact the VIC if  
you require any research  
requirements.**

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If you would like to contribute  
to this newsletter, please  
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**We're on the Web!**

**Visit us at:**  
[www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au  
/casterton/historicalsociety](http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/casterton/historicalsociety)

Also to past associate Cheryl Elmes (hoping life's good with you) and to Jim who offered his recollections. Many thanks to Daryl Povey at Ballarat and District Genealogical Society. Also to South East Family History Group [www.sefhg.org.au](http://www.sefhg.org.au) – Colleen and to Jan Lier who forwarded the Border Watch Thursday April 12<sup>th</sup> 1956 with death notice and report. I know there will be more people who have offered stories and recollections along the grapevine, but with whom we didn't get to speak to directly – thank you for your kind input, it doesn't go without our appreciation.

Further afield, in Joseph's research - thanking the assistance of the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne for Electoral Rolls and news clips; to Tricia Parnell and colleague Linda Gray and to Sheila whom I met a few years back, superbly helpful, at the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies [www.aigs.org.au](http://www.aigs.org.au); to Phillip Lomas at the South Australian Attorney-General's Department of Births deaths and marriages, Adelaide; to the South Australian Genealogy & Heraldry Society Inc. [www.saghs.org.au](http://www.saghs.org.au); and to the National Archives of Australia who helped with inbound passenger lists [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au). If I have made the mistake of leaving someone out, I apologise ahead of time. Please remind me, you know who you are ☺ And so full circle back to that glorious weekend in Mount Gambier and surrounds! The weather was great, we shared some wonderful home baking and fun meals out; and wild life....even Kangaroos showed up on Beth and Keith's homestead (which for newbies was a real treat!) ... we learned so much. Be in touch anytime and of course further recollections always welcome! It was great to meet you all.

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Joseph William HUGILL came from the north of England to Australia in 1924 age 18 as a blacksmith, with 'only a bean in his pocket'. His father had been killed the year before in a Mill accident. Joe had worked with his brother (my granddad) with the blind pit ponies down the pit in Sherburn, Co Durham. Nothing is known of his life in Australia from 1924 other than he was probably a shearer; but from 1931-1936 Electoral Rolls show he is a labourer at Wando Bridge. Electoral Roll 1937 has him as a labourer at Ardno and we know while he is at Ardno, for some of that time he lives at a property he names 'Durham' after his home county in England. In 1953 he marries 'Belle' GAMMON (nee PENNY) of Ardno East. He dies age 50 of a self inflicted gunshot wound, after three days in Mount Gambier hospital, on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1956.