## Casterton and District Historical Society Inc Newsletter

## SEPTEMBER 2010

## Items in our newsletter:

Caledonian Union Hotel page 1-2 A big problem by Jim Kent page 3

## Next Meeting Wednesday 15th September at 2pm at RSL

Members meeting with Pam Enting on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Friday 17<sup>th</sup> Sept for those involved with the Cemetery project.



Caledonian Union Hotel<sup>1</sup>
John Scott Grant
and Ann Kilpatrick<sup>1</sup>



# Mistorical Happenings



**Casterton Community Museum** 

## John and Ann Grant Caledonian Union Hotel, Sandford

by Catherine Bell

The name Grant has long been associated with the Casterton district. Most recently, Grant's *Albion Hotel* in the main street of Casterton was something of a landmark. Before, however, Grant's *Caledonian Union Hotel* in Sandford was a grand public house, which, in its time, was one of the more substantial watering holes in the Western District. The rather sad one-storey relic of the *Caledonian Union* that stands in Sandford today reveals little of the character of the original hotel. And behind the history of both hotels lies the story of a resilient and enterprising couple, John Scott Grant and Ann Kilpatrick.

### John Scott Grant and Ann Kilpatrick

John Scott Grant and Ann Kilpatrick grew up in Edinburgh, Scotland and shortly after their marriage in 1841 they migrated to Australia on what was to prove to be a dramatic voyage. The barque *India*<sup>1</sup> caught fire and sank six weeks into the voyage and 600 miles off the coast of Brazil. John and Ann, as well as most of the passengers, lost all their possessions but were fortunate to be rescued from the wreck and taken to Rio de Janeiro where the British Consul accommodated the survivors on a small island in the bay. A month later, the British authorities organised for them to continue their voyage on the Grindlay, arriving in Port Phillip Bay on 22 October 1841. During the next seven years, John and Ann worked on several large properties in the Casterton district including *Dunrobin* (William Murray), Konongwootong (White Brothers), Merino Downs (Francis Henty), Cashmere(vale) Station (Doctors Isaac and Corney) and Longlands (Alexander Donaldson). While John was employed as a blacksmith, agricultural labourer, and shepherd, Ann undertook domestic work in the homesteads. Ann gave birth to four sons during this time: James, Robert, Allan and George.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> During John and Ann's lifetime, a lithograph of the burning of the barque *India* was displayed in an ornate leather frame in the front parlour at the *Caledonian Union Hotel*.

## Historical Happenings,



THE CALEDONIAN

UN.ION HOTEL SANDFORD.

J. GRANT

Bigs to announce to his Friends and the Public in this and the neighbouring towns and district as well as in the metropolis, that he has now near y completed his magnificent Hotal at Sandferd, and solicits a share of the p-trenage which his long management of his former establishment entiles him to hope for

#### THE CALEDONIAN HOTEL

Is the largest and meet commodious building in the Western District, and has been erected and funnished in the very best manner, and at a great outlay. The accommodation now offered to gentlemen and ladies visiting this part of our unrivalled colony has never before been attempted.

Besides the numerous large single bedrooms, servants' room, and other apartments usually provided, the Caledonian Hotel beasts an elegant and lofty

> DRAWING ROOM. 38 feet in length;

Suited for Balls, Concerts, and Public Entertainments.

And several Private Sitting Rooms, for families, with bedrooms.

all these have been comfortably carpeted, and handsomely furnished.

J. GRANT begs to acquaint those Gentlemens who may hose him with their custom, that the Table and attendance are under his own management, and the Stock of Wiras and Springra has been selected by excellent judges, and on the whole they will be found as perfect as anything in the colony. The charges will be extremely moderate

N. B. —Stabling very complete, with loose boxes for racese, and the better bred nage.

the public that he intends to have

HOUSEWARMING on the lat of July Towards the end of 1848, John and his family left the district in search of unoccupied grazing land in South Australia. They acquired a run near Penola, naming it *Morningside Station*, and two more children were born there: John and Annie. However, the gold rush lured them back to Victoria in 1853 and John became one of the luckier miners. His success on the goldfields financed the purchase of the *Woodford Inn* at Dartmoor <sup>1</sup> in 1854 <sup>1</sup> and their seventh child, James Scott Grant (my great grandfather), was born there in the following year.

Not long after, John and Ann were drawn back to the Casterton district when town allotments became available for sale in the new settlement of Sandford in 1856. <sup>1</sup> John purchased five town lots in Sandford on the Casterton- Portland Road on 17 September 1856 <sup>1</sup> and subsequently sold the hotel in Dartmoor and moved his family to Sandford. <sup>1</sup>

#### Caledonian Union Hotel

During the summer of 1856/1857, John and Ann built a large two-storey brick hotel on their land in Sandford at an estimated cost of 5,000 pounds. They named their new hotel the *Caledonian Union Hotel*, reflecting their joint Scottish heritage. The hotel licence was approved on 18 May 1857 and it was the second hotel in the town to gain a licence. The first hotel licence had been granted two weeks prior, to Thomas Walker of the *Sandford Hotel*.

The *Caledonian Union Hotel* was an impressive structure but considered by some to be 'a rather pretentious building.' It quickly gained a good reputation, with one local recalling that 'it was a fine two-storied building and had a good name too... it was a splendid building, with fourteen inch walls'.

## Caledonian Union Hotel 1



During the winter of the following year, John and Ann invited all the locals to the housewarming of their new hotel:<sup>1</sup>

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We're on the Web - visit us at:

www.ballaratgenealogy.org/ casterton/historicalsociety

## Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project

We have now completed all sections - Jan needs to finish up doing the bits and pieces on the computer, then we will walk again to re-check.

To contribute to this newsletter, please contact Jan Lier - tel Visitor Information Centre on 5581 2070 or e-mail <u>jlier3@bigpond.com</u> or Ros <u>roscov48@bigpond.com</u> tel 5581 2875

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> NB new email address for Ros

## Historical happenings stopped by a huge problem by Jim Kent

Over the recent years members of the Casterton Historical Society have been traversing the district bounded by the borders of the old Glenelg Shire, pre amalgamation. In doing so they have been cataloguing the sites of previous government schools, public and private cemeteries, churches and hotels which once existed and operated within the boundaries of the previous Shire.

Recently our work in this respect saw our members, with the assistance of some third and fourth generation locals to the district, catalogue the various schools, cemeteries, churches and hotels that once abounded south of the Glenelg Highway which traverses the district of Strathdownie. More recently we moved over on to the northern side of the highway so as to log the locality of these infrastructures that existed in the Kaladbro and Lake Mundi areas.

One interesting grave exists in the southern region of West Strathdownie wherein lies the remains of a man shot dead, either by accident, or design, by the owner of a large nearby property, the altercation occurring over some previous arrangements made dealing with horses.

The victim was buried where he was shot and died, and the aftermath of the event aired in a hastily convened court in Dartmoor saw the property owner subsequently tried in a Melbourne Court which imposed upon him the penalty of a fine of one shilling, in today's currency the value of ten cents.

To complete this exercise we now propose to traverse the Casterton-Penola road where we will record the sites of three hotels, five schools, one church and a number of private graves. The last-mentioned private graves gives reason for this article because buried quite near the banks of the large area of land referred to as Granny's Swamp there lies in a private graveyard the mortal remains of Hugh McEachern who died nearby in 1862, aged 86 years.

Arriving in Australia in 1839 at Sydney after a voyage from Morven in Argyleshire, Scotland, Hugh and his family overlanded to a property now located on the Casterton-Penola road. Here he settled on 55,000 acres and called the property *Heathfield*. Today it is still known by that title. It joined another property of 20,000 acres known as *Tullich*. During his lifetime Hugh McEachern was known as a noted pastoralist and was a revered colonist for a number of years. His family of seven sons and four daughters has descendants in this district today.

On the steep banks of Granny's Swamp there grows some enormous river red gums, not quite but almost as big as the famous Bilston tree located at Brimboal. Through the efforts of the Aborigines laboriously removing some sections of bark from these trees to use as floating platforms in the gatherings of foodstuffs from the waters of Granny's swamp, decay set in. With the assistance of termites, known as white ants and naturally occurring bushfires, the internal makeup of these ancient old trees plus the ferocious winds occurring in this locality sadly caused one of these giant trees to fall over. It now very effectively blocks the track into the walled gravesite of Hugh McEachern, who reputedly also has some twelve other people buried alongside him within this well-kept graveyard.

The track to this sacred ground and the area surrounding the gravesite and beyond is on what is known as Crown Land. Now this type of land is under the jurisdiction of the current Department of Sustainability and Environment and no private person can execute and work or remove any objects without the permission of this governmental body.

Therefore I have advised the local office of this Department of the problem of this fallen tree obstructing the track into this historic gravesite where descendants of the noble pioneer Hugh McEachern carry out maintenance and other good works at the burial site.