

Historical Happenings

Items in our newsletter:



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What's on

*Next Meeting of the Historical
Society*

Wednesday, 20th October

2pm at the RSL



**October outing to wildflowers is
cancelled**

**November outing: Sunday 14th
to Chetwynd
Lunch with Sloba and Iliya
Cost \$20**

***John Garland and Geoff Watt will
escort us to sites around Koolomert
West***

***Please book with Ros on 5581 2875
to ensure your place: 20 maximum
for lunch***



John and Ann Grant Caledonian Union Hotel, Sandford

Part 2

by Catherine Bell

During the winter of the following year, John and Ann invited all the locals to the housewarming of their new hotel:¹ Six months later, towards the end of December 1857, John Scott Grant held a Christmas race meeting at Sandford, followed by a concert and a dance where the Hartz Mountain Band played:¹

Despite the extremely hot weather, the race meeting at the *Caledonian Union Hotel* was declared a success with the Sandford correspondent for the *Portland Guardian* reporting that:

We have had today one of the most severe hot winds that has been known for some years past: the wind from the northwest. About 12 o'clock it blew so warm that it was impossible for any outdoor work to be done. The races at the 'Caledonian' were greatly impeded by the heat, but a great deal of sport was gone into for all that, and some good matches were got up by Mr. McEachern [and details of others whose horses won], after which a great deal of pleasure abounded by all parties engaged.¹

Two more children were born in Sandford: Hellen and John (in memory of their son named John who perished in the bush near Penola). John and Ann worked together in the hotel, with Ann serving behind the bar with her husband. John also operated a blacksmith's foundry at the rear of the hotel. He purchased several farming properties during the 1850s and 1860s in the Sandford district and divided his time between running the hotel and working his farms. In 1865, John Scott Grant built the *Albion Hotel* in Henty Street Casterton. Its doors were opened for business on 12 December 1865¹ and while John's eldest son, Robert Grant, held the original hotel licence, both Robert and his younger brother, George Grant, ran the hotel.

John and Ann showed community spirit in allowing local Catholic priests to conduct church services in the front private parlour of the *Caledonian Union Hotel* prior to the Catholic church being built in Sandford in 1866.¹ John and Ann also hosted numerous shire

John Scott Grant and Ann Kilpatrick¹



Caledonian Union Hotel¹

SANDFORD RACES.

JOHN GRANT, Caledonian and Union Hotel, informs his friends in the neighbourhood and the public generally, that on the 23rd December races will take place at the above establishment. The stakes to be run for will be as follows:—

	£.	s.	d.
1. a Gold Watch, the value of.....	22	0	0
2. a Musical Box, playing 8 tunes	12	0	0
3. a single barrel Fowling Piece, } by one of the best makers, new. }	7	7	0

Races to begin at 12 o'clock. Distance one mile. Catch weights.

For the Watch	6	horses to start or no race,
do do Musical Box	6	do do
do do Fowling Piece	3	do do
Entrance	£3 3s	for Watch
do	£2 2s	do Box
do	£2 2s	do Gun

No trained horse allowed to start
The proprietor begs to state that the Hartz Mountain Band will play in the evening and a dance at the conclusion of the concert.

Tickets for Concert and Dance 5s. each.

meetings at the *Caledonian Union Hotel* as well as a Colonial Bank agency during the 1880s, with the money being conveyed each evening from the hotel to the Colonial Bank in Casterton for safekeeping.¹

John Scott Grant was instrumental in establishing the Ancient Order of Foresters in Sandford on 21 January 1863. A pioneer of Sandford recalled that:

Mr Thomas Jeffreys of 'Muntham' went to Casterton and asked Mr Chaffey for a room in which the society might hold its meetings, but was refused, the reply given to Mr Jeffreys' arguments, as to the advantages of a Court of Foresters, being, "We can bury our own dead." Mr Jeffreys was not daunted however and he asked Mr Grant, who at once said 'yes', and advanced fifteen pounds to open the Caledonian Court.¹

John was the Ancient Order of Foresters' first treasurer and, to begin with, hosted its meetings at the hotel. However, things didn't always run smoothly as a local person recalled:

Let me just recall a circumstance connected with the Foresters Court. You know we were rather jovial in the early days, and though Mr. Grant had so generously given us a room, he got tired of us once, good Forester as he was. One night we were indulging in a bit of fun, and we broke one of the chairs, so Mr. Grant got on the rampage and cleared us out.¹

Fire at the Caledonian Union Hotel

Unfortunately, tragedy struck the Grant family on 28 December 1870 when a spark from the *Caledonian Union Hotel's* chimney ignited the shingle roof and fire severely damaged the hotel. The *Coleraine Albion*¹ described the disaster:

On Wednesday last there occurred at Sandford the most extensive fire which it has yet been our duty to record – a fire by which the well known and old established home known as the Caledonian Hotel at Sandford has been entirely destroyed.

From the information we can gather, it appears that a young man named John Burns in the employment of Messrs Leimer Bros., storekeepers, was riding down the principal street of Sandford when he saw what appeared to be sparks issuing from the roof of the Caledonian Hotel, near a stack of chimneys. It was not very plain but he at once pulled up and told Mr Grant what he had seen. Mr Grant could hardly believe him but went with him into the yard to see, thinking perhaps that the chimney might be on fire.

From the yard, however, they could see nothing, so after a minute or two's delay, Mr Grant went into the house and upstairs. Here he at once found that one of the top rooms next to the roof was on fire, and in two minutes later the people outside and down below saw the flames burst through the roof. The building was two stories in height besides the basement floor. It was a large substantial building of brick with a shingle roof and had been built a dozen years.

At this time the fire was confined to the roof – the shingles of which, dry as tinder, were burning freely – and the one room.



Casterton Community Museum

We're on the Web - visit us at:

[www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/
casterton/historicalsociety](http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/casterton/historicalsociety)

Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project

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

To contribute to this newsletter, please contact
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Caledonian Union Hotel

Had there been a fire engine the house could have been saved, as a hose playing on the roof would have effectively checked the fire; but there Had there been a fire engine the house could have been saved, as a hose playing on the roof would have effectively checked the fire; but there was no such thing at command, nor was there any ladder by which the roof could be reached, nor any trap door from the house into the roof. Even if there had been this last, the fire might probably have been got under. As it was, the men, however anxious and eager, could do but little good. There was a tolerable supply of water in a well in the backyard, and a line was quickly formed and buckets passed along with as much rapidity as possible. These were passed upstairs and thrown into the burning room; but their effect was absolutely nothing. Slowly, but steadily, the fire gained ground, spreading over the roof, and from there to the rooms below. In the meantime, willing hands were industriously engaged in saving the furniture from the lower part of the house, and also the stock in trade of the hotel. This was completely effected, all the property in any way moveable on the ground floor and in the cellars being got out. Moreover, the verandah was pulled down, and all the fencing and timber connections between the house and the stables were removed by which means the extensive range of stables and outhouses was rescued from destruction, which otherwise would have certainly have overtaken them. About an hour after the fire was first discovered the roof fell in with a thundering crash, and the large building then became one huge burning mass, sending up such immense volumes of black smoke that it was seen by the men reaping in Mr. Templeton's fields, near Coleraine. All attempts at checking the fire was now given over, and it was quietly left to burn itself out, which it did in about three hours from the commencement. Mr Grant's establishment, at the time of the fire, consisted of himself, his wife, and daughter. He had several men in his employment at the time, but they were engaged making and carting hay at Mr Grant's farm at Dwyer's Creek, and had not been near the home since the early morning, so that the large premises at the time of the fire, and some hours previous, were almost unoccupied. In considering the cause of the fire, this fact is important, as it of course lessons the chance of the fire having been occasioned by the carelessness of any particular individual.