

Casterton and District  
Historical Society Inc  
Newsletter

DECEMBER 2011

# Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

## Items in our newsletter:

A Brew that Cheers by Jim Kent  
Parkie Kim and the Kim family of  
Casterton

## A Brew that Cheers

by Jim Kent

*Happy Christmas and all best wishes for the New Year 2012 to all.*

### NEXT MEETING

We will meet on Wednesday,  
February 15th, for an informal  
welcome back BBQ at the Visitor  
Information Centre at 7 pm.  
BYO drinks and salads/plate.  
BBQ snags provided.

### Island Park lagoon



### Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project:



Since mankind first slaked his thirst by drinking the water of streams, springs and lakes, he has sought to improve on in some cases camouflage its somewhat bland taste. He found that by adding various substances, plants, bark and so on, a more delectable thirst quencher was achieved. He then went on to be able to make a liquid by using the distillation method, the primary source of material being grains containing yeasting properties.

Indeed a liquor can be made from practically anything that will ferment, for example wine can be produced from the leftover bud of the rose flower, and of course mainly from the crushing of the grape family of fruits, almost any form of fruit will produce wine. While in the carbonated section of liquor production the grains of various crop heads are the primary reactor when manufacturing ales and stouts and such like drinks.

All this preamble is just to lead you into the astonishing fact that prior to coming up and establishing our Casterton township none other than Alexander McKinlay was the owner-operator of a brewery in nearby Portland where he made and sold ales.

I don't know that if Casterton ever had a legal and commercial brewery at any time. Certainly quite an extensive "home brewing" activity has, and still is, taking place in and around our town by those who like to produce for their own consumption a drink greatly improved upon that provided by nature.

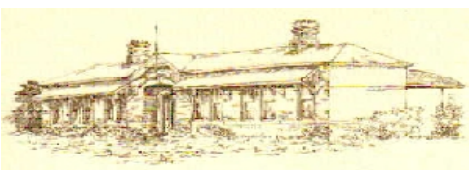
From the mid 1800s Jeffrey Brothers produced a magnificent variety of carbonated non-alcoholic drinks right here in Casterton. I do know that a brewery existed in neighboring Hamilton and in Mount Gambier where a certain types of ales were produced for sale.



Merino Downs in 1920



Casterton Cottage hospital



Another form of enhancing the bland taste of water is the heating of it and then adding the dried leaves of the tea bush, a member of the Camellia family. Powders in the form of coffee, cocoa, malt and various other condiments are also used to flavor Nature’s basic product.

Today in the commercial world we see enormous edifices dispensing fermented and spirituous forms of drink while numerous shops excel in the making of various types and blends of teas and coffees. Indeed your writer, now in his mid 80s, first enjoyed a beer prior to sitting for his Merit (equivalent to year 9) in 1939, and has since then gone on to enjoy a “drop of the doings” in the shape of whisky, wines and ales and enjoyed every drop of it.

In its natural state water should only be used to float boats or run under bridges

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Kim Family – Yonnie, Ethel May, Jamie, Gin Meng, Slue, Yaun, Fee

### “Parkie” Kim and the Kim Family of Casterton

The recent passing of Arthur “Parkie” Kim on October 15<sup>th</sup> in Melbourne means there are no longer any descendants of the family resident in Casterton. Parkie was resident at Edgarley for the past two years, the first time resident here since boyhood. Born in 1919, he had left as a boy for Melbourne where he worked at Austral Wheelworks, and also had a stall at the Vic Market for forty five years.

In October his brother, Ray, from Sydney, drove Parkie to Melbourne for a family reunion. Tragically, Parkie suffered a fall there and was hospitalized. He passed away the following day

**Casterton Community Museum**



Kim Family - Yonnie, Ethel May, Jamie, Gin Meng, Slue, Yaun, Fee



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visit us at:

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in hospital due to the complications ensuing from fractured ribs.

The Kim story in Australia had begun with Gin Meng Kim who worked on a boat for passage and landed in Tasmania in the early 1880s. Somehow he survived with work in the tin mines after arriving in the country penniless. Later he went to Melbourne and there he met his wife Ethel May

They moved to Runnymede where other Chinese ran a market garden. In 1903 Mr Kim leased some land from the McCormack family and Alf Mitchell gave him a horse and a spring cart to give him a start. He hawked vegetables around Paschendale, Merino and Waterloo, known as Tahara.

In 1908 Mr Kim purchased land behind the Casterton Hospital and Rueben Futreal, Jack McDonald and George Garrett helped clear the land with axes and mattocks. The Kims moved to Casterton in 1910 and carried on market gardening for half a century. In those days water was carried in the old Chinese way with two buckets and a pole. Later Mr Kim ran water from the spring. He had great faith in the Chinese calendar. "Farmer with bare feet, sign of wet season".

In 1914 Mr Kim was anxious to see his homeland again and took his family for a holiday. While they were there bandits raided the village and Mr Kim was taken away and held for ransom for the equivalent of ten dollars. With great presence of mind Mr Kim had hidden their few precious dollars in a rice bin. Ten dollars in those days would have kept a person in China for a year.

The Kims had a family of nine children, all having Chinese as well as Australian names. They were Loon Jamie, Loon Slue (Stanley), Loon Yon (Reginald), Loon Fee (Albert), Loon Yaun (Cyril), Loon Lena (Victoria), Loon Jon (Raymond), Loon Chee (Athol) and Loon Parkie (Arthur), who was the longest lived of the family.

One son, Fee, after working at the Springbank station market garden, in 1929 opened a greengrocer's in Henty Street, Casterton. He was aged 20 at the time and the business continued for forty years.

In 1981 about fifty descendants of the Kim family had travelled from Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne and Shepparton for a family reunion in Casterton. Mr Geoffrey Koo of Sydney spoke on this unique occasion. As a mark of respect he called for two minutes silence to remember deceased relatives. His father, Mr C Koo, gave a talk on the family reunions in China where almost whole villages travel far and wide to attend.

Parkie Kim is survived by his brother, Ray, in Sydney and sister, Lena, in Melbourne.

*Bibliography, part: Gleanings 1, compiled by Doris Milward (for sale at the Visitor Information Centre)*