

Casterton and District Historical Society Inc Newsletter

**JUNE 2012** 

### Items in our newsletter:

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## **NEXT MEETING**

AGM - to be held on the third Wednesday in August - is our next scheduled meeting. Further details will be posted in July.

### KENTS CORNER BOOK -CONTINUING SUCCESS

Due to the great interest in Jim Kent's book all copies sold out fast, including the second printing.

The third printing is NOW available at the Visitor Information Centre, at a cost of \$25.00.



A special potato train in July 1912

Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project







**Casterton Community Museum** 

Sobriquets by Jim Kent

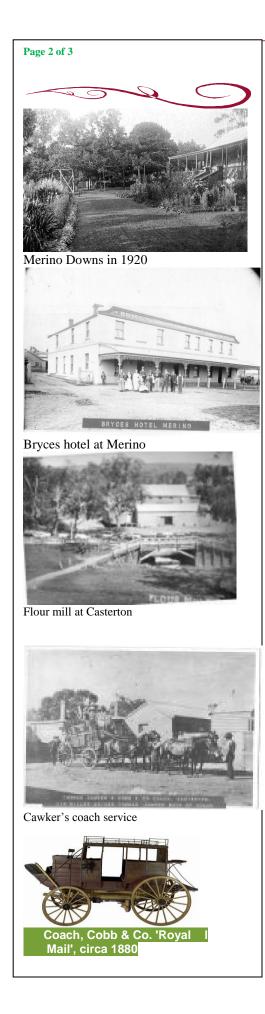
Casterton, like most other Australian towns, is notorious for creating nicknames by which various people are saddled. These sobriquets are known and referred to so much so that in a lot of cases their original first name is sometimes hard to bring to mind.

My Bonnie Jean and I were blessed with eleven wonderful children and in the course of events we bestowed upon them, at Baptism, various first names sourced from the ancestors of both Jean and myself. But no, it wasn't long before all of them had nicknames. Cecily became known as *See-Saw*, Barry became *Bazza*, Ellen answered to *Nenny*, Nicole became *Nicco* and so on, right through the eleven of them.

Around the town of Casterton various notable people were lumbered with sometimes hilarious titles such as the late Bill Mapeson, an old coach driver for Jack Cawker. Bill was always called *Sweet Marie* - I believe this came about by him being a loser for the affections of a girl called Marie.

Within my lifetime our town was serviced by four hotels and the barmen who dispensed the golden liquid of enjoyment. Starting at the Western end of Henty Street was the Railway Hotel, and should you seek the solace of liquor within you would be served by a barman called *Tosca*, so named after that great singer Toscanini. This barman earned this title because of his constant singing in very melodious voice the current hit songs. His correct name was Tom Whitfield.

On the opposite corner to the Railway Hotel stood the Casterton Hotel, a very popular watering hole. At this establishment, in total command of the bar, was genial big bloke known to all as *Knocker* Clarke. Don't ask me his Christian name because I don't know but I did know his pretty daughter, Carmel, as I went to school with her. I believe he



earned the title of Knocker for his ability to eject any patron of this bar who was inclined to misbehave, with the greatest of ease.

Down near the Post Office a very gentle widow and her daughters owned and conducted a high class hotel known as The Albion, a Celtic word as the Grants, the owners, were of Scottish origin. Here in the salubrious bar of this hotel was one of the most humorous and honest barmen I have ever come across, and believe me I have frequented numerous bars all over Australian within my lifetime. This small, rotund little fellow answered to *Muscat*, no doubt derived from his surname Urquhart, his Christian name being Thomas.

And finally down at the river end of Henty Street, at the Glenelg Hotel, the owner and barman was known as *Banger*, his full title being Bertram Tucker. In his pre-hotel days he was a tank-maker, banging in the rivets that in those days held the galvanized rolls of tin used in tank-making.

A one-time honored member of our Historical Society, a foundation member, was better known as *Cutter*, rather than his full name of John Francis Gorman. Cutter's father was a racehorse trainer who was suspected, at times, of giving his horses a drop of "go-fast" juice. Now John Francis Gorman had the ability, in his younger days, to run and win foot races at the local carnivals. He also had one brother better known as *Risky*, although his right name was James Adrian Gorman. He got his title because he was compulsive gambler. It so happened that the two brothers went to the New Years Day sports carnival at Chetwynd where a bookmaker was laying odds on the various events taking place.

John Gorman was entered in the Chetwynd Gift footrace and his brother Risky, alias James Adrian, intended to back him heavily to win. To make sure he did win Risky spiked his brother's drink before the race with some "go-fast" juice his father used on the horses. John won the Gift by a mile causing his brother Jim to comment that "he went like a cut cat". And that is how Jack Gorman became better known as Cutter Gorman. The same Cutter Gorman was possessed of a remarkable memory relative to the history of various events and happenings around our district. He has left behind some extremely interesting books that he wrote about his life and a number of other subjects.

To conclude, although my baptized name is James, I have always had the nickname of Joe, as my son James has also.

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The Kim family of Casterton c 1900



**Railway station complex Casterton** 

We're on the Web - visit us at: <u>http://www.swvic.org/castertonh</u> <u>istoricalsociety.htm</u>

Our Address PO Box 48, Casterton 3311 Phone: 5581 2070

Most historical records are housed at the Casterton Visitor Information Centre For e-mail enquiries go to:

<u>castertonhistorical@hotmail.com</u> download our research request form and forward.

# Museum visits, requests to open:

contact the Treasurer, David Coventry, tel 5581 2475 davidccoventry@yahoo.com.au

To contribute to this newsletter, please contact Jan Lier at the Visitor Information Centre on 5581 2070 or e-mail at <u>jlier3@activ8.net.au</u> or contact Ros at <u>roscov48@bigpond.com</u>

### REUNION NEWS: Zes Gesusters - January 2013

A reunion to celebrate 160 years since the arrival of the <u>'Zes Gesusters'</u> aka <u>'Six Sisters'</u> emigrant ship will be held on **Sunday**, **13 January**, **2013**, at Geelong, Victoria.

For more information, please contact reunion organizer, Rob Newland at <u>robjnewland@yahoo.com.au</u>

A most interesting memorial and expression of thanks **From The Argus (Melbourne)** Friday, 21 January, 1853

### MEMORIAL

To Captain Ruhaak, Commander of the Ship" **Six Sisters**" from London to Geelong, Australia.

We, the undersigned, being emigrants on board the ship of which you are the Captain, beg most respectfully to record our entire approval of your conduct, and also, of the officers and crew under you, towards us during the voyage.

Your general kindness to the emigrants from the youngest to the eldest, (and especially to the children), and your co-operation with the Surgeon Superintendent on all occasions to promote our welfare and happiness, have se-cured for you our unqualified respect and esteem, and ungrateful should we be were we to leave the ship without shewing some token of our feeling towards you.

We therefore present this with our best wishes for your future and eternal happiness, hoping that when you have done with the storms and tempests of life, an abundant entrance will be ministered unto you into the Eternal City, where all is calm and peace.

Signed and presented by your grateful and obliged servants, this 17th day of January, 1853.

MATHEW ATKINSON, JOHN WEBB, and 139 others.

## Archival Access Victoria: Bringing the Victorian Archives to

**YOU.** History at your fingertips – A few interesting iPhone Apps worth mentioning for the tech-savvy researchers out there.

**Vic-Heritage App** – made for the iPhone, it helps you to explore and learn about the architectural and historical treasures of Melbourne and regional Victoria, providing mobile access access to the Victorian Heritage Database. The app can find heritage listed locations in your general vicinity or you can search for a specific heritage item buy name, location, etc. The app includes photos of heritage listed buildings and details of their historical significance.

**iTunes U** – this app is like a university in your pocket. Subscribe to 'courses' and download podcasts of lectures and interviews from experts in a wide range of fields. You download the podcasts direct to your phone and you can listen and learn while walking the dog or waiting for a train. La Trobe University has an 'Australian History' course in iTunes U .The 20+ topics in this course (completely free) includes topics such as immigration, Aussie slang and the whaling industry. If you don't have an iPhone, you can still access the content created by La Trobe on their podcast webpage.

Casterton Historical Society website: http://www.swvic.org/castertonhistoricalsociety.htm