

Casterton and District
Historical Society Inc
Newsletter

October 2012

Items in our newsletter:

A Brief History of the Casterton and District Historical Society by Jim Kent
A Casterton obituary

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

Next meeting

Our October meeting will be an excursion to Muntham Station on Tuesday, October 23rd at 2pm. Please bring a plate. Contact Dawn Black on 5581 2350

Harrow Sound and Light show is also to be held on Saturday 24th November for any members interested. Bookings are filling fast. Contact Dawn Black on 5581 2350
The next in-town meeting will be on **Wednesday, November 21st, 2pm** at the RSL, Casterton.

August AGM

Members and visitors very much enjoyed the day at Harrow, first at the Johnny Mullagh Cricket Centre for a tour of the Bradman Collection and Museum. This was fascinating even to members with an avowed lack of interest in cricket. A credit to Harrow, it is a great little museum. A very nice lunch of fish and chips followed at the Harrow Café, then came the AGM - and later members visited the very interesting Clunie's Woolshed.



The team to tour England in 1868



Harrow Historical Society



AGM

A Brief History of the Casterton and District Historical Society

by Jim Kent

The Casterton Historical Society came into being in 1964 owing to the efforts of some local people who had a great interest in things of an historical nature and of the people who settled in this district in the early 1800s. The driving forces of the Society when it was in its infancy were people the likes of John F Gorman, known as *Cutter*, who was possessed of a remarkably retentive memory of events and people of the district.

Another stalwart was a retired banker, Hugh Ross, who devoted hundreds of hours of volunteer work to the establishment of the Society. Marjorie Koch in her time as President took the Society to great heights and standing in the local community. The Baxter family – Aubrey, Charlie and William Thomas, better known as *Bonny*, and their wives, were to devote their energies to the collection of artifacts. Kevin and Eileen Tierney served the Society for many years, giving of their time and knowledge in the recording of past events. So it goes on, a body, of in most cases, of elderly people intent on collecting and storing articles of interest, those used in the early days of settlement. The early days of the Society saw members gather for monthly meetings where it was quite common to have forty to fifty people recorded in the minute book. Sadly, in the passage of time, many of the early members have passed on.

It was not until the 1970s that the Society had a home for its collection and it came about through the demise of the Victorian Railways and the relinquishing of the rail service from Branhholme to Casterton. This action left Casterton with a magnificent railway station building of six rooms built with clinker bricks, the first of this design in the railway system. Italianate in origin, It became known as the Casterton design when built at other sites. The then local shire of Glenelg took control of this building and in turn entered into an agreement with the Society who would occupy it, as it still does.

The late Hugh Ross spent a great deal of his time in a volunteer capacity painting the rooms and arranging the artifacts for exhibition. Some of these items were donated to the Society, while some were on permanent loan, and they represent a lifestyle quite different to that of today.

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Due to the great interest in Jim Kent's book published November 2011, copies sold out immediately. A new printing is available again at the Visitor Information Centre - we hope to publish a new edition in 2012.

Clunie Woolshed



Casterton New Cemetery



Over the years our Society has been the recipient of some items of immense interest and managed to save some of the early 1800 and 1900 editions of the Casterton News and they are now stored in appropriate boxes. Other items include cabinets from a department store that underwent modernisation. One of our most historic items saved from the scrap metal dealers is a Turkish Army, German-made, six inch Howitzer used by the Turks in WW1. This cannon was restored by Society members and is housed in an under-cover site adjacent to the Railway Station building.

The Railway station building which now houses the Society's museum has, over a period of time, undergone considerable restoration. Its roof has been replaced and the metal verandah poles and lacework have been sandblasted and painted. The woodwork and other points have been painted.

The Rotary Club of Casterton joined with the Historical Society under the Preserve Our Cultural Heritage scheme and together we were able to obtain a substantial grant of \$42,000 from Heritage Victoria. This grant provided the funds for the restoration which was done in 2002. The Glenelg Shire spent a substantial amount of money on termite eradication and on replacing some of the flooring timbers.

To give you some idea of the interest in our Society from the local residents, it is recorded that one hundred and ten people turned up for the first working bee at the Railway Station to convert it into an Historical Society museum. Their work was not in vain as we see today the 1886 Railway Station still in very good order and housing a collection of local artifacts and newspapers 140 years old.

Some years back, under the direction of Jan Lier, a talented computer operator, the Society decided to move to a more modern method of recording local data. We now have access by way of microfilm and computer, to a vast range of local knowledge of past happenings and events. Sadly, I don't even know how to switch these modern appliances on and have to rely on the computer that was in my head when I was born. I have progressed from a slate and slate pencil to a biro pen, a tremendous learning leap for me.

Recently the Society has undertaken a recording of the sites of the various State schools that were operating in the surrounding districts from the 1880s to the latter end of the 1900s. With the amalgamation of the Shire came the shifting of the base to Portland, thus leaving behind in Casterton all the Rates Notice books and other Shire records. Our Society undertook to store these records at the Railway station museum, where they prove to be of great help in any relative research into local matters.

In the early days of the Society it was most fortunate to have the services of a secondary computer teacher at the Casterton College who taught his pupils to use the newly arrived IT systems. Graham Lawrence was appointed to the office of secretary and in this role lifted the Society to even greater heights. His forte was research and in documenting the

Casterton Community Museum



Roseneath bullock team



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We're on the Web - visit us at:

[http://www.swvic.org/
castertonhistoricalsociety.htm](http://www.swvic.org/castertonhistoricalsociety.htm)

CDHS is located at the Casterton
Visitor Information Centre

e-mail:

castertonhistorical@hotmail.com

Our address:

PO Box 48

Casterton 3311

Phone: 5581 2070

To visit the Casterton

Community Museum: call **David**
Coventry on **5581 2475** or email at

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
jlir3@activ8.net.au
or contact Ros at
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tel 5581 2875

various artifacts he was most competent. Another member who devoted much time and effort to looking after finances was the late Mrs Nell Peart. Her nimble mind meticulously accounted for all monies received and expended

Over almost sixty years the Society has been most fortunate to have been the recipient of services of capable, talented and devoted members. And this situation continues to this present day where we see the Society under the control of a dedicated and learned executive. This body is headed by a dynamic chairperson in the form of Jan Lier. Since Jan's entry into the Society we have been brought out of the pen and paper stage to a position of high class IT technology, whilst retaining the objects of our original charter which basically stands for the Society to research, collect and store local history and artifacts.

The Museum is open to the public by request, although now through a policy of deaccession the area it now houses considerably less items of a local source. This policy of deaccession was adopted as the Museum was becoming a delivery place for items of sometimes doubtful value in a state of advanced wear and tear. Those articles that were on loan were returned to their owners and articles not regarded as applicable to our local area were give to another museum housing artifacts of a more general nature.

We are most fortunate to have as a member Vern McCallum, a professional photographer-restorer. Vern's collection of ancient photos recording the events and places of interest around Casterton and district is nothing less than remarkable. Adjacent to the Railway Station Museum is the old gaol which became redundant when a new police station was built. We have shifted our IT technology to the Visitor Information Centre, this action being accelerated by the high humidity of the railway station being detrimental to these appliances. Our museum now houses items which it owns and has on show and is also used as a repository for articles not affected by high humidity.

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Mr Hugh Glancy: Obituary, Casterton News, 1908

We regret to have to record the death at the advanced age of 86 years, of Mr Hugh Glancy, father of Mr J Glancy of this town. The late Mr Glancy was with one exception, perhaps the oldest resident of the Casterton districts, he having arrived at Muntham in the year 1841. He was born in Portobello, County Roscommon, Ireland, in 1822, and arrived in Australia per the Himalaya in 1841. Deceased had resided at Muntham, Sandford, Pine Hills, Condah and Bahgallah. He sold his farm in the latter place, and latter lived a retired life in Melbourne, where his death took place.

Deceased was possessed of a great store of reminiscences of the old pioneering days of the Western District, to recount to any friend who took an interest in such matters – "tales of the olden days". On the 16th March and 30th of same month, we published under the heading of "Pioneering Days" several columns of such reminiscences and they proved most interesting reading.

The death of Mr Glancy removes one of the links that binds us with the long past of these districts. Deceased was a general favorite amongst all classes and creeds of the community, a good neighbor and affectionate friend and general regret will be felt at his death.

The deceased leaves two sons and two daughters. It may be remarked as somewhat singular that it is just over 20 years today since Mrs Hugh Glancy died.

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CDHS WEBSITE: we are the Web - visit us at

<http://www.swvic.org/castertonhistoricalsociety.htm>