

Casterton and District
Historical Society Inc
Newsletter

December 2012/January 2013

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

Items in our newsletter:

The Story Behind the Shell Label by Jim Kent
Book review, The Fatal Shore
PROV News

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be our usual first meeting of the year, a BBQ (provided). Wednesday, February 20th at the Visitor Information Centre at 7pm. Please bring a plate - salad or a sweet/fruit, and BYO drinks.



Henty Street - 1890s

Thank you Dawn and Phillip

In November local members were delighted to make a longed-for visit to historic Muntham station. The Oldham family made us very welcome and after a lovely afternoon tea we toured the house and grounds. The station is in a magnificent setting – the house itself and the unique brick barn are hugely impressive, not to mention the large spring-fed dam, the garden and a more recent olive grove. We were lucky enough to leave with a sample of Muntham's own delicious olive oil. A great afternoon.

The Story Behind the Shell Label

by Jim Kent

I was born with an enquiring mind and it has only become more accelerated as life has gone on, as different things would trigger the questions “why is that so?” or “how did they arrive at that logo?” As an example, I was curious to know why a certain brand of fuel and oils carried the logo of an ordinary sea shell. This is the story behind this sea shell logo.

Have you ever wondered what was behind the logo when filling up with motor fuel at one of the service stations displaying the huge coloured shell? The origin is quite involved and it took me some considerable time to fathom it all out. The correct terminology for this shell is the word *pecten* mainly because of its configuration.

It started back in 1833 when Marcus Samuel had a small shop in London, England, where he sold sea shells to eager buyers. His business grew considerably and it became an import-export enterprise operating under the logo of a large sea shell known as the pecten. He had a son who saw an opportunity to export oil for cooking and lighting to the Far East, reaching the stage of having his own *Samuel* shipping line delivering the commodity to the eastern sea ports, all of the ships being named after sea shells.

In the Netherlands a company had been formed to develop oilfields in Asia, the Royal Dutch Company, and by the late 1800s the company also had its own shipping line of oil tankers. Early in 1900 the Royal Dutch and Samuel companies joined forces and became known as the Shell Group of Companies, using the pecten sea shell as a corporate trade mark. And in a further connection, a Mr Graham was the importer of the Samuel oil into India and the scallop pecten shell formed part of the Graham coat of arms. Mr Graham was to become a director of the Shell Transport and Trading Company.

KENTS CORNER

Due to the great interest in Jim Kent's book published November 2011, copies sold out immediately. A new printing is available at the Visitor Information Centre – we will publish a new edition of articles late in 2013.



The once impressive verandah of the Glenelg Hotel

National Library of Australia -Book of the month

In Search of Beauty: Hilda Rix Nicholas' Sketchbook Art

By Karen Johnson Featuring full-colour reproductions throughout, *In Search of Beauty* showcases the life and work of artist Hilda Rix Nicholas (1884–1961), including her two sketchbooks held by the National Library.

Forgotten Australians remembered -

National Library of Australia: the Library is releasing a commemorative booklet to mark the third anniversary of the National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants. In 2006, the Library launched a national oral history project to record the stories of these remarkable Australians. Over 200 interviews have been recorded to date, with many already available [online](#).



Clunie woolshed

So from Marcus Samuel selling sea shells in a London shop, to India, then all three getting together as one huge conglomerate concerning oil wells, sea tankers and the marketing of fuels, we then had a common denominator to make use of a corporate logo, a common sea shell.



As with the mascots on cars, I am always interested in the reasoning behind the use of these particular items as logos or trademarks. Now you know what is behind the big shell sign when you fill up at a Shell service station. The big hill at the eastern end of our town of Casterton was once known as the Shell Spirit Hill because it had a huge advertisement board erected on its face advertising the products of the Shell Oil Company.

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Reading history: THE FATAL SHORE by Robert Hughes

In its short history, Australia preferred to forget that it began as a penal colony. Australian historians born under the British Empire would accentuate the positive. Recently historians began to tell the real story of what the formative years of the white man's Australia had been like and it became apparent why forgetfulness had been so nearly complete. The story was horrible.

In *The Fatal Shore*, Robert Hughes, an Australian-born critical writer has summed up all previous efforts, and brought the whole deadly business back to life. The result *is* hard to bear — or would be, if it were not so clearly one of those rare achievements by which the unimaginably inhumane is brought to book without making us give up on humanity..

Fortunately, he has made *The Fatal Shore* the *magnum opus* of his maturity. By now his sense of historical scale is sound. It would have been easy to call the Australian system of penal settlements a Gulag Archipelago before the fact. The term 'concentration camp', in its full modern sense, would not have been out of place: at least one of the system's satellites, Norfolk Island, was certainly designed to make its victims long for death. He is able to bring out the full dimensions of the tragedy while keeping it in perspective.

Living many years in New York has rewarded Hughes well, not least with much free time. This book is what he did with it. He went home and rediscovered his country, in a prose that adds something to Patrick White's vision of the Australian landscape — clarity, straightforwardness, a sparkling simplicity without distortion. Finally, the best thing about *The Fatal Shore* is just that: going about other



Roseneath bullock team



Nangeela homestead

We're on the Web - visit us at:

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

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business, it doesn't try to be a work of art. Hughes has managed to speak with the arresting verve that Australians of today, fancying themselves as natural democrats, would like to think of as their peculiar tone of voice — the breath of sanity.

(Clive James, *New Yorker*, 23 March 1987)

PROV NEWS: Archival Access Victoria - Bringing the Victorian Archives to you

Top three tips for searching @ PROV

TIP 1 - Think big!

Although the PROV has indexed a very small portion of their files, there are still millions of records that you won't be able to find my searching for the name of an ancestor. I always start with a location, and see what is available for the area the person I'm researching is from. Searching for John Smith in the catalogue wont help you much, but searching for records from the town or city he was from is a good place to start! And remember, local government areas changed names quite often, be sure to read up on their history!

TIP 2 - Make connections

Don't forget that the PROV only holds records created by the State (with a few minor exceptions), so it is important to think of the interactions your ancestors may have had with the government. This isn't hard to do, as they aren't much different to today's dealings with government. Land purchases, school records, court documents etc. Think of one of these then see what records are available for the Lands Dept. or Education Dept or the local court where your family lived. Extra hint, some responsibilities were handed over to the Commonwealth from 1901, so you may need to contact the National Archives for some records.

TIP 3 - Use third party resources

Make use of other resources available. They may be indexes of records at PROV (see below in relation to VPRS 19), or even TROVE. Not sure where someone lived? Search on TROVE and see what areas they pop up in, then search PROV for records from the area. Or use the electoral roles on Ancestry.com and do the same! And don't forget the [Victorian Government Gazette](#) online through the SLV. The beauty of the gazette is it has that State Government flavour to it so it is an excellent companion to PROV records.

Hopefully those tips generate some ideas and get you thinking differently at what you might find at PROV - there is always something new to find!

Best wishes for Christmas and for the New Year 2013

CDHS WEBSITE: we are the Web - visit us at

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