

Casterton and District
Historical Society Inc
Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2013

**Next meeting: Wednesday 20th
November**

will be an excursion to Mount Burr, Millicent and surrounds. Lunch will be at the South East History Centre. To be escorted by members Noel and Sheila Boyle of the Millicent SEHC of South Australia.

Lunch at the Centre. Bring a picnic lunch or buy from Millicent Bakery. Meet at the RSL at 8.30 am.

Executive Committee

The 2014 executive committee voted in at the AGM is now:

President: Dawn Black

Vice President: Sandra White

Treasurer: David Coventry

Secretary/Public Officer: Ros Coventry

Membership fees remain the same, \$15 single and \$25 family and are 2013-14 fees are due now, following the AGM.



Sandford shop 1981

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

KENT'S CORNER: Roamin' 'Round the Town: volume 2 will be launched on

Saturday, 30th November at Casterton Town Hall at 11am.

Copies will be available at the Visitor Information Centre: cost is \$25. Get in quick for an ideal Christmas gift.

The Story of a Sandford Store

by Jim Kent

John and Eliza Nicholls originated in Cornwall, as did my ancestors back in the sixteenth century. Another coincidence the Kents have with the Nicholls is that both families emigrated and landed in Portland in 1854. My forebears had detoured via Ireland, living there for two centuries before coming to Australia. The English invaders made things uncomfortable for the Kents when they were farmers in Ireland, so they packed their belongings and landed in Portland on 25th April 1854 on the sailing ship Almora, which will be 160 years ago on Anzac Day in 2014.

John Nicholls' trade was as a carpenter and he obtained work with the Henty brothers, coming up to Casterton district to work for Teddy Henty at Muntham. Another coincidence, my grandfather, Mick Kent, did the same thing and was a wool presser and fencer on Muntham. He then went on to Casterton to become a road and bridge building contractor. John and Eliza went to Sandford and this is their story.

John built a store out of stringy bark slabs on the main track to Portland which went through Sandford. He had bought four acres on the south side of the township and built his first store in the mid 1850s. It was around 1860 when he built an elaborate store out of large pieces of beautiful ironstone together with mudstone. It had aged red gum floor bearers sitting on stones with imported pine flooring boards, the stones being mortised together with home-made mortar.

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. Price \$25.

Sacred Heart Pupils c 1911



Henty Street / Tyers Street corner
Glenelg Inn 1873



The Logs gaol, Henty Street, demolished c 1907

Connected to this stone store John built a two stored weatherboard dwelling where he and his wife reared six children.

The store was one of first commercial premises and the 1880s Sandford boasted five stores, a flour mill, three hotels and three hundred residents. At one stage John ad bought the Beehive store opposite the Bridge Inn on the eastern bank of the Glenelg River at Casterton while his family still operated the Sandford store. John Nicholls died in 1888 and his widow and children ran the Sandford store and leased the Beehive store. Eliza died in 1908.

One of his sons converted the big stone store to a butcher shop, doing the killing in the paddock behind. His name was William Nicholls and he died in 1917. His widow then ran the shop with her sons Gilbert and Walter until the early 1920s. They still lived in the attached house which had seen the top storey removed. Catherine Nicholls, the widow of William, died around 1950.

Some of the Nicholls boys took up land and owned a property called Easter Glen on the south side of the Bahgallah-Sandford road with frontage to the Glenelg River where the bridge on this road is now. Others were involved in the hotel trade. A William Nicholls had the Casterton Hotel and land on the Dunrobin road around 1912. They were very industrious people of ambition and ability.

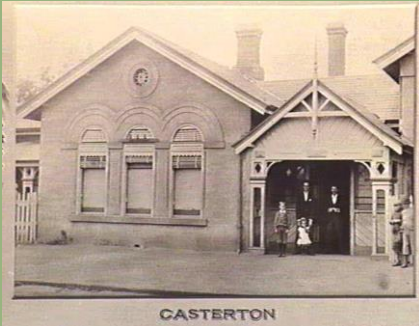
I don't know when the Sandford butcher shop stopped trading but in the 1980s the then Shire of Glenelg had a car parked outside the Henry street Town Hall driven on week days by volunteer drivers for the use of Casterton and Sandford residents to do their shopping. I was a regular volunteer driver of the car . It happened that an elderly lady was living in the house part of Nicholls old store and she was a regular user of the shire car service. She was no relation to the Nicholls family who had sold the old store and the house and land to this lady and her partner, who had since died

The big stone parapet of the store was leaning at an alarming angle, which disturbed Chrissie, the elderly owner. I offered to pull down the stone part of the store if she would give me the stone, which she agreed to do. I pulled down and sold off the beautiful red gum and pine flooring and brought the stone up to a property I had bought on the Noss Road. There was an estimated two hundred tonnes of stones which I used to blank off the wall of the house part, also using the flatiron that came from the Drive-In picture enterprise which was nearby and was also demolished.

Chrissie died not long afterwards and a teacher of woodwork from the High School at Casterton bought the house and land and has since done a beautiful restoration of the old Nicholls home. I built



Post office 1897



CDHS is located at the **Casterton Visitor Information Centre**
 e-mail: castertonhistorical@hotmail.com

**PO Box 48
 Casterton 3311
 Phone: 5581 2070**

To visit the Casterton Community Museum:
 call **David Coventry** on **5581 2475** or email at davidcoventry@yahoo.com.au

To contribute to this newsletter, please contact Ros at the Visitor Information Centre on 5581 2070 or e-mail at roscov48@bigpond.com
 H tel 5581 2875

a stone gateway and curved wall with the stones from John Nicholls' Sandford store at my new property. I sent two of the stones over to Denmark in the south of Western Australia where Margaret and Lexie Nicholls now live. They were most appreciated and they now have these two stones in their garden. I had sandblasted them, which exposed their beautiful burgundy colouring,

I have written earlier of the coincidence of the Nicholls and the Kent family through business and acquaintance and now several other occurrences come to mind. When the motor firm of Little and Kent came into being in the early 1920s one of the shareholders was Jim Cox. who wife was a Nicholls. Son Francis Russell remained on staff until the business was sold post war.

Another attachment to the family was me, when in my mid teens my first love affair was with a girl whose mother was a Nicholls. Then again down the sale yards road adjoining a paddock my Dad owned was one the Nicholls family owned and Dad bought it when it came up for sale. Today there are still descendants of this pioneering family residing in Casterton and Sandford districts.

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Casterton Historical Society 50th Anniversary 2014

In 2014 we will celebrate fifty years since inauguration its as a society - we are discussing ways to celebrate and commemorate the event. One thing we plan is to have a celebration at the Old Cemetery to publicize and make known the recently completed and very handsome board of names of those in unmarked graves, numbering some several hundred persons.

Any members who have ideas and suggestions for other ways to mark this occasion of the fiftieth anniversary are encouraged to do so. It is a special year for us and we can continue to honor this anniversary throughout the year – we need more ideas to kick around.

All suggestions / contributions most gratefully received.

CDHS WEBSITE: we are the Web - visit us at
<http://www.swvic.org/castertonhistoricalsociety.htm>

