

Casterton New Public Cemetery

Friends of the New Cemetery Newsletter



CEMETERY MAPPING PROJECT DAYS

2nd & 4th Saturday of the
month starting Sept
10 am to 12 noon

WORKING BEE
SUNDAY 30th August
8AM TO 12 NOON
(WORKING BEE)
Followed by BBQ

August 2009
Volume 3, Issue 2

Dame Mary GILMORE
by local historian and
former cemetery
trustee chair
Mr
Jim Kent

Dame Mary GILMORE (1865 – 1962)



**"It is not how
much you do,
but how
much love you
put in the
doing."**



Casterton New
Cemetery
Aerial View

Following a recent enquiry from Anthony McAleer from the Immigration Museum in Melbourne regards Dame Mary Gilmore , Jim Kent has provided some notes on the life of Dame Mary Gilmore 1865 – 1962. Relatives of William Gilmore, (Dame Mary's father in law) namely Jim GILMORE and Lulu GILMORE nee MINOGUE are buried in the Catholic section of the cemetery.

Over the years our town of Casterton has been home to many notable people, one of which was Dame Mary Jean Gilmore.

Born to parents, Donald Cameron, a native of Inverness, Scotland and Mary Ann (nee Beattie) whose parents had emigrated from County Armagh, Ireland.

The 16th of August 1865 – saw the entry to this world, at Maryvale, near Goulburn, NSW a baby girl who would be named Mary Jean Cameron. Little did her farming parents know that their daughter would become an honoured Australian, and have a royal honour bestowed upon her.

Her father could best be described as a “wanderer”, trying his hand at various pursuits, and by doing so moved his family around the more settled parts of NSW.

Her mother was more of a settled nature, and while living in Sydney did some writing for various newspapers, and journals, printed at these times. No doubt her daughter, Mary Jean, inherited her remarkable writing skills from the maternal side of the family.

Mary’s schooling was of a broken nature owing to the nomadic lifestyle of living her parents adopted life, however she managed to complete her primary school to such a degree that enabled her to become a pupil teacher at various schools.

Later on in life she became a full time teacher at schools sited at Silverton, NSW and Neutral Bay, around the close of the 1800’s.

It would have been while teaching at Neutral Bay that she struck up a friendship with that famous Australian writer Henry Lawson. Just how far this relationship between these two kindred people reached is unknown, as far as the romantic side of things is concerned. Lawson is reputed to have desired to marry Mary, but this cannot be vericated.

Without doubt their lines of thought were on the same plane, both Mary and Henry wrote of the plight of the poor and exploited worker of the day, their articles were published in the Bulletin, a large and radical newspaper.

Around this time the great shearers strike occurred which saw the birth of the Labour Party, Mary supported this fledgling political party with her writings to both the Bulletin and the Worker, the A.W.U. newspaper, she also wrote articles and poems for the female side of this Union.

And now we come to the part of her life when her name was to be changed from Cameron to Gilmore.

There lived in the southern part of the old Glenelg Shire a family by name of Gilmore, in the area we know of as Myaring, the property has long passed out of the Gilmore hands, and today “Shallum” is in the hands of the third generation of Sullivans.

The sons of the original Gilmore owner, as a means of making a living used to travel the land by railways and bicycle, to the northern states and shear sheep on the great sheep stations of NSW and QLD. Conditions in those days were vastly different from today, so bad were they that it saw Jack Gilmore die of food poisoning at the age of 22 years, he is buried in the western Queensland town of Winton.

His brother, William Andrew Gilmore was to meet up with Mary Jean Cameron and from then on complete their lives together.

It so came about that one enterprising chap by name of William Lane had visions of establishing a New Australia in the far off land of Paraguay, he collected around himself numerous disciples with the same ambition, among these were Will Gilmore and Mary Cameron.

Enquiries to:

Casterton New Cemetery Trust

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***Recommencement of
the Cemetery
Mapping
SATURDAY SEPTEMBER
12th***

10am to 12 noon



The consignment of visionaries sailed from Sydney to Paraguay in 1896 and commenced the establishment of this utopian colony, which sadly did not succeed.

William and Mary married, whilst in Paraguay and left the new born colony, William found work on a local ranch, and Mary resumed her teaching, it was here that the only child of the marriage was born in 1898, a son who they called Dysart William Gilmore.

The Gilmore family returned to Australia and lived on a property near the ancestral home of the Gilmores, their property was located in the area we know of as Wilkin.

It is some 35 years or more since I have been on this riverside property at Wilkin, then the poplar trees that Mary planted were fully grown, legend has it that Mary brought the cuttings from Sydney with her, she had them wrapped in a damp flannel cloth.

In later years after she had returned to Sydney, this property of William and Mary Gilmore passed into the hands of Jack McDonald, better known to us as Quart Pot Jack, and from him to Constable Jack Phillips, who renamed it "The Ponderosa", it is presently a privately owned property and residence.

William Gilmore resumed his shearing career basing himself at Cloncurry Western Queensland where he had a brother, who was a land owner, he was to die there, and is buried in the Cloncurry cemetery.

Mary and her son were for some time domiciled in the southern end of McPherson St Casterton, so that her son could receive his education at the nearby primary school, Mary continued writing articles for the newspapers of the day.

Then with her son she returned to Sydney where she continued her prodigious writings for all types of newspapers, both radical and otherwise, she had many books of prose and poems published, whilst all the time campaigning vigorously for a range of social and economic reforms.

She was a founding member of the Lyceum Club, Sydney and also of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, a member of the Journalist Institute, the Australian Labour Party and the RSCPA

She was to be honoured and feted Australia wide, and in 1937 was made a Dame of the British Empire, which recognized her work for the poor and exploited. She died at 92 years old, and after a State funeral, she is buried with her husband and son in the Cloncurry Cemetery.



Dame Mary Gilmore on the \$10.00 note

**WORKING BEE
ON
SUNDAY 30TH AUGUST**



**8 AM TO 12 NOON
Followed by a BBQ**



**Please bring along your tools including
chainsaws, hand sprayers, whipper
snippers, hand mowers.
Also required a tractor and slasher and
Ride on mowers.**

Thank you for your support

*Newsletter
Friends of the Casterton New
Cemetery
c/o Gormans Real Estate
Henty Street
Casterton, 3311*

