

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

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Campbell's Cutting and Culvert by Jim Kent

In the first instance entry into the valley where the township of Casterton is now located was with great difficulty. This came about because of the descent from the tablelands on the east side of the valley was guarded by, when used as a adjective, bluff headlands.

Legend has it that the very first track into the valley of the now township was where, later on in the 1880s, the Victorian Railways deepened the cutting to accommodate their rail lines, just before crossing the now Racecourse road, and the Glenelg River. If you were to look up on the bank of the northern side you can still see the outline of the first track into Casterton.

Later on entry into the valley became possible by coming in through a cleft in the hill to the north of here, and then down onto the flood plain of the Glenelg River. This hill was known as the Black Hill entrance, don't ask me why, and today it is called Arundell Lane, and runs east off Noss Road.

It was on this Black Hill that our subject, Dugald Campbell built his first home, a round brick house. Some surviving fruit trees mark the spot. Dugald was born in Scotland and emigrated to Australia, landing in Portland in 1854, his trade being that of a stonemason. At Portland he plied his trade working on the various bluestone buildings in that town, many of which are still standing.

He moved up to Casterton around the 1850s, possibly because Catherine Matheson, whom he was to marry, was employed on Nangeela station. Dugald Campbell is credited in building both the Dunrobin and Nangeela homesteads, Nangeela being a two storied edifice and Dunrobin with servants' attics.

Next Meeting of the Historical Society

21st April
General Meeting – RSL
Casterton 2.00pm
3rd Wednesday of the month

What's on in May?

May
Field Trip to the South East
Family History Group,
Millicent.
Visiting Penola & Millicent
historic sites.

19th May
General Meeting – RSL
Casterton 2.00pm
3rd Wednesday of the month



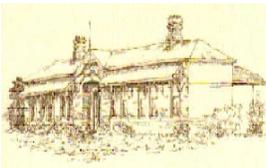
Annual dinner held at the Albion for
the March meeting

Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project



We have now completed all sections just need Jan to finish up doing the bits and pieces on the computer then we will walk the walk again to recheck.

Jan will contact all when ready probably in May.



Casterton Community Museum

Devastated by the death of his wife, Catherine, from complications at the birth of their fifth child, Dugald then proceeded to have his mother and family, plus his wife's relatives, emigrate from Scotland to Australia, where they assisted with the rearing of his motherless children. This extended family was to take up the opportunity of selecting Crown lands around Casterton and in the district of Corndale, where they eventually owned 1800 acres.

My life seems to have been somehow connected to Dugald Campbell, as when I was a child in my parents' home in Robertson Street, the house next door was the last resting place of Dugald, who died in 1909. Later on in my life I was to own two of the properties he had selected adjacent to the railway bridge over the Wannon River and I called them "Campbells".

Again, when I bought the eight acres on the Noss Road from the Sydney owner, I found on the title one Dugald Campbell had been the original owner. Dugald and his brother, Neil, supplemented their income by doing road work and bridge work for the then local Glenelg shire. One of these contracts is the focal point of this discourse.

About one kilometre from the road junction of the Hamilton-Portland roads, as you ascend towards the tablelands on the Hamilton road, there are two rather deep cuttings into the hill. The cutting the now highway travels through is of a gradual curve, and of recent making, owing to road realignment.

Behind this recent cutting is also another very deep one. The spoil from this cutting was used to fill the low land on the descending side, a right-angled curve took you down this roadway. This particular cutting, in my younger days, was known as "Campbell's Cutting", having been made by Dugald and Neil, using horses and scoops.

Now before I close I must bring to your attention a remarkable piece of work worthy of an historical notice which forms part of this now unused roadway. To relieve the storm waters trapped by the filling they put in, Dugald constructed a large round brick culvert, exercising his stonemason skills.

I ask the question, how many brick layers today could construct a round brick culvert of 60 centimetres diameter that would carry traffic and last over 100 years. Surely this culvert is worthy of an historical plaque recognizing the remarkable skill of this Scottish-born stonemason.

As a youth, many a time I crawled through this large man-made waterway, and wondered just how on earth it was made and why the bricks just didn't fall down.



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requirements.

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Visit us at:
[www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au
/casterton/historicalsociety](http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org.au/casterton/historicalsociety)

ANNUAL DINNER, Saturday, 13th March

The annual dinner this year had an Anzac theme. Our guest speakers were John and Hatice Basarin who spoke on the subject of the sinking of the Australian submarine AE2 in the Dardanelles in WWI. The dinner was catered for by the Albion hotel and by all accounts all enjoyed the dinner and the evening.



FIELD TRIP TO STRATHDOWNIE, Sunday 21st March

A field trip following on from an earlier one was a treat for Historical Society members. We first toured the Strathdownie cemetery, then the Wilderness Church and had picnic lunch at the Strathdownie Hall. Our guides, John McGrath and Ian Harvey, introduced us to Lois and Bill Harvey at their home, who told us about the tiny township of Lindsay (the Inn) and their family connections to the area. Their first home was the former Border Inn now renovated and occupied by their daughter and family nearby.



We also visited Mrs Irene Hill and her son, Andrew, who showed us photos and some old mementos of Casterton. Lake Mundi was on the agenda but put on hold for another day as we ran out of time.