

Casterton and District
Historical Society Inc
Newsletter

JULY 2012

Items in our newsletter:

The Old Goods Shed
Reunions in Horsham / Geelong

NEXT MEETING:
Harrow Outing

**The AGM will be held on
Wednesday, 22nd August, at
2pm in the RSL hall in
Harrow.**

We will combine the AGM with a day's outing to the museum, lunch and a visit to the woolshed and other sites.

Local members should advise Ros if attending on 5581 2875.

Lunch will be available from noon at the Harrow café.

KENTS CORNER publication -

Due to the great interest in Jim Kent's book all copies sold out immediately, including the second printing.

Copies of the third printing are now available at the Visitor Information Centre, at a cost of \$25.00.



A special potato train in July 1912

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

The Old Goods Shed at Casterton

by Jim Kent

The restoration of the old goods shed building and platform at the one-time terminus of the Victorian Railways station at Casterton is to be commended. Prior to this work being carried out by the controlling body, VicTrack, the building and precincts was indeed a forlorn site.

Looking over the restorative job brought back many memories. The human mind is an incredible piece of the human body – just consider how looking at this old building can trigger the mind to recall events, in my case which occurred over the past 75 years. It does this in a manner no doubt very similar to today's modern computer.

In my childhood my parents and siblings lived at what is now number fifty Robertson Street. The houses were all on one-quarter acre building blocks fronting onto Robertson Street on the eastern side, and Holszrefe Lane on the western end. On this block my father had planted golden wattles and flowering gum trees.

Such is the nature of mischievous children, I decided to ring-bark one of the big wattle trees - much to the sorrow of my father. Rather than deliver any physical punishment for the act of vandalism, he suggested I strip the bark of the wattle tree. I would have been around ten years old at the time.

With my tomahawk I stripped it and made two bundles of dried wattle bark, for which there was an ongoing demand at the time as it was used in the curing and tanning of leather products. My Dad took me and the bark down to the railway good shed where a Mr John Downes was buying bark for a Melbourne firm. Mr Downes weighed the bark and paid me the then handsome sum of nine shillings, or ninety cents today, which went straight into my bank account.

The first railway employee in charge of the goods shed that I remember was Robin Elshaug's father, Ted, a very nice old chap, then it was Syd Cox, Mrs Ian Mackie's father, and then various other locals had a go until the line was closed down in 1977. The shed was then leased out to various people, me being one of them, and for a time it was the repository of various artifacts belonging, or on loan, to the Historical Society.



Railway station complex at Casterton



Flour mill at Casterton



Cawker's coach service



Coach, Cobb & Co. 'Royal Mail', circa 1880



Former Railway Station, now the community museum



The shed being in an isolated and unlit area, it was the subject of burglary on several occasions. There was the ever-present vandalism occasioned by children in the closing down stages of the railway line from Branhholme to the Casterton terminus. The railway station building was closed and the administrative employees operated out of a portable office tacked on to the goods shed. It is still there, with all new windows.

Another memory surfaced with the recall of a charitable movement by the Rotary Club, of which I was a member, under the classification of Motor Freight Transportation. It was in the late 1970s when the northern part of New South Wales was in the grip of a severe drought. The local Rotary Club invited donors of baled hay to deposit them in the open end of the goods shed platform and from there I loaded and took semi-trailer loads up to the Scone and the New England area of NSW. I would back-load with steel to Melbourne, then wool from Melbourne to Adelaide, then cement from Adelaide to Casterton – quite a round trip.

Inspecting the restored work recently, it came to pass that the open end of the platform which some years back suffered severe damage to its timbers by a deliberately lit fire, was all pulled up and a demolition merchant was recovering any usable timber from this section. I was able to inform him that the timber bearers were WA jarrah, while the platform timbers were local red gum.

While on the subject of this platform, some years back a huge sum of money was spent resourcing red gum timber to replace the more rotten timbers on the platform. Since then considerably more of these timber slabs have seriously deteriorated and in the restoration work of recent times this has been addressed in what I consider a shortsighted manner.

In between the new slabs that were used to replace broken ones, some years back secondhand pieces of timber have been used giving the platform what appears to me to be a "patchwork" appearance. While the pre-used slabs will last some time it is still only a temporary fix.

It would be nice to know that the ultimate aim of VicTrack in regard to not only the goods shed precinct but to the whole area of land which is under their control. For as long as I can remember there has been agitation by Casterton residents to open up a road through this land to link up Jackson Street thereby eliminating the ridiculous set up of detours by streets that surround this land. It is now thirty five years since Vic Rail closed this line which terminated only a few hundred yards from where Jackson Street is blocked off – it doesn't add up in my book.

Incredible though it may seem, in past years when road transport was in its infancy and the government-run Vic Rail had protection from competition, there were quite a number of people who earned their living delivering goods which arrived at the goods shed via the Vic Rail system.

To name some; Arthur Plummer had a horse-drawn wagonette and Tom McCombe had two tray-trucks, while in the shed itself three people

Casterton Community Museum



Kim Family - Yennie, Ethel, Mye, Jamie, Gin Meng, Sise, Youn, Fee

**The Kim family of Casterton
c 1900**

We're on the Web at:

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

Our Address

PO Box 48, Casterton, 3311

Phone: 5581 2070

Most of the historical records are housed at the Casterton Visitor Information Centre

For e-mail enquiries go to:

castertonhistorical@hotmail.com

- download our research request form and forward

CASTERTON COMMUNITY

MUSEUM: open by appointment

To visit the museum please

contact **David Coventry**

Tel: 5581 2475 or email

davidcoventry@yahoo.com.au

To contribute to this newsletter, please contact Jan Lier at the Visitor Information Centre on 5581 2070

e-mail at jl1er3@activ8.net.au

or Ros at roscov48@bigpond.com

attended to the receiving and discharge of goods. Up on the northern end of the platform there was once a huge manually operated crane used to unload the heavier items from the railway carriages, and that has long been gone. These are some of my reminiscences relative to the old goods shed. It was pleasing to see the overhangs on the station windows renewed when restoration of the station building took place. Earlier grant monies had run out before these parts of the station could be replaced. The northern abutment of the station platform also received remedial restoration. The ramp located next to the goods shed was put in by Vic Rail during World War 2 to give elevation to trucks and wagons delivering flax, wool bales and so on to the railway wagons.

It only remains now for the VicTrack to come to the party and allow Tuckett Street and Jackson Street to be established through the now disused railway yard. And at the same time VicTrack could release power over that section at the northern end of the land where local bodies desire to build a new multi-purpose building. Without doubt, this now "island" of public land will never again be used as a railway line as the lack of two necessary bridges over the Glenelg and Wannon Rivers with their flood plains emphatically rules this out.

So that is where we are now, sniping away at VicTrack for these changes.

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REUNION NEWS:

James Henry Ball: family reunion and book launch
at Hamilton Lamb Hall, Horsham - Saturday, August 25th at 2.00 pm

The descendants of James Henry Ball who came to Australia from Woolaston, England in 1852 and settled near Casterton, Victoria will be gathering at the Hamilton Lamb Hall, Kalkee Road (between Lynott and Wavell streets), Horsham on 25 August for a reunion and to launch a family history book.

James Henry Ball had 2 marriages – to **Annie Price** and **Catherine Hanley**. We would love to see descendant of the 22 children from these families.

For registration and ordering the book or disc please contact **Mary Birch**, 27 Bleakley Street, Horsham, 3400, ph. (03) 53826778; email - embirch@optusnet.com.au

Zes Gesusters - January 2013

A reunion to celebrate 160 years since the arrival of the '**Zes Gesusters**' aka '**Six Sisters**' emigrant ship will be held on **Sunday, 13 January, 2013**, at Geelong, Victoria.

For more information, please contact reunion organizer, Rob Newland at robnewland@yahoo.com.au

Check the CDHS website for an enormous amount of information about Casterton and district families, cemetery records, properties and stations, early maps, settlement history, pioneer settlers, the history of local horse racing at the **Casterton Historical Society website:**

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