

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

Teaching the three Rs in Casterton by Jim Kent

Mary and Alexander McKinlay first established a rough slab public house, the Glenelg Inn, to cater for the people traipsing across the land headed for the gold fields in the east, and also for the more conservative types who had pastoral pursuits in mind relating to the land Tom Mitchell, the surveyor and noted explorer, had referred to as "Australia Felix". From this activity the township of Casterton evolved. As the population met, married and started families and the urgent need for schools, became a necessity it came to pass that the first school was established on what we Casterton people refer to as the "Church of England Hill".

There were no churches in the embryo town, so this building also catered for those of the Anglican persuasion and the ministers of this religion who held their services in this school, and rightly so, as its establishment came about through the efforts of the Church of England. This small single room was built only eleven years after the McKinlay's arrival in Casterton and was erected in 1857. It was situated between the current Church of England building and the Rectory in Henty Street. James Bonwick, Inspector of Schools in the 1850s, said in his report that "Casterton was favoured with having a really pretty stone school room".

Indeed the exceedingly popular Church of England minister of this time was no less than the Reverend Dr Francis Thomas Cusack Russell, who held the position of chairperson of the school board. It is of note that other denominational ministers used these premises for their services also. Now you must remember I am writing of times one hundred and fifty years ago and in those times very little of our town was in existence so this building was in demand for all sorts of activities such as church services, schooling, concerts and even to the stage where within its walls the Sons of Temperance was formed.

These Temperate gentlemen continued to hold their meetings in this school, indeed at one stage Reverend Russell addressed the assembly with a sermon on the evils of alcoholism. There was no such thing as the Education Department nor any other form of infrastructure to help parents with the education of their children. If a teacher could be found the salary for the teacher was governed by the number of pupils using their teaching methods, indeed the pupils paid for their learning. The more pupils the higher the teacher's earnings, a most unsatisfactory state of affairs.

By the close of the 1860s land surrounding the now surveyed township of Casterton was being taken up and settled by farming families and this factor exacerbated the education problem. Before 1862 there was, in Victoria, a dual system of education, denominational and national, much the same as is now in 2013. In 1862, an Act of Parliament changed all



Wednesday, 19th February.

Meet at the Old Cemetery at 10am. We will take stock of what needs to be done before the unveiling of the new name board. Volunteers will later be needed to help clean up the area for the celebration.

Wednesday, March 20th.

at Island Park BBQ area at 6.30pm. Bring a plate, please, meat and some drinks provided. **PS:** Bring a chair for comfort, only hard benches in situ.

Henty Street / Tyers Street corner
Glenelg Inn 1873



Sandford shop 1981



Sacred Heart Pupils c 1911



The Logs gaol, Henty Street, demolished some time after 1910

Casterton Historical Society 50th Anniversary, 2014

In 2014 CDHS will celebrate fifty years. Any members who have ideas and suggestions for ways to mark this occasion of the fiftieth anniversary are encouraged to do so. All suggestions / contributions most gratefully received and discussed.



this, and the first school in Casterton, established by the Church of England as a denominational school, was no more and it became Casterton Common School No 134.

By the mid 1870s the town population was around the one thousand mark which resulted in approximately two hundred children of school age. This as you can well imagine caused all sorts of problems as regards seating in the small building known as Casterton Common School No 134. So much so an enormous petition was initiated to prod the politician responsible for education into the erection of a much larger and more easily managed school than the little old one roomed stone building that had been in existence since 1857.

As a result of the massive petition, the responsible politician promised, just as they do today, to build a bigger and more hygienic place for the purpose of educating the town children. It was not until 1876 that tenders were advertised for the building of a new brick school at Casterton. Children were still being taught in somewhat horrendous conditions and diseases such as scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, mumps, chickenpox and so on were being experienced by the pupils and also their teachers. Any vacant public hall or building was being used in conjunction with the old church school, now under the control of a Board of Education, for the purpose of accommodating school age children.

In 1877 a tender was accepted and a new brick school was under construction on land acquired on the eastern side of McPherson Street with the Glenelg River nearby. It was anticipated this new school would cater for around 180 pupils, among them my father, who attained his Merit Certificate in this brick school. By 1878 the Common School No 134 was closed and the new brick school then became the Casterton State School No 2058.

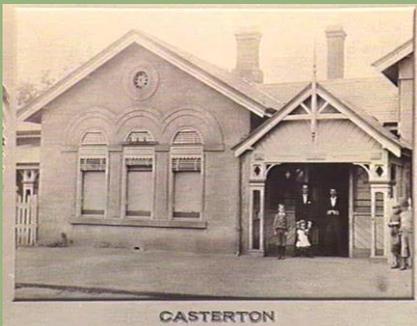
As is the case now, and also in the 1800s, all teachers assisted in the conduct and improvements of the schools, overseen by a board of civic minded people intent on improving the lot of both teachers and pupils. Around 1884, the Head Teacher of the Casterton State School No 2058 also became the inaugural president of the Sons of Temperance. The full title of this body was the Casterton Total Abstinence Society and its main purpose was to do away with any connection to alcoholic liquor.

By 1890 it is recorded that the town had a population of some fifteen hundred inhabitants and by the very nature of the fertile land surrounding Casterton it had attracted farming settlers which in their turn laid foundations for commerce by way of shop keepers. This explosion of people caused overcrowding in the recently constructed brick school, No 2058, where the average attendance was in excess of two hundred pupils, so pen went to paper with more petitions to have additional buildings adjacent to the brick school.

The mills of the then Minister of Education ground very slowly and despite numerous pleas from the head teacher and the school board warning of the dangers inherent to overcrowding class rooms, it was not until 1893 that some relief to this situation occurred. It was only a stop gap by way of bringing into the Casterton school site, the old Brimboal school room, hardly a satisfactory solution to the dilemma that the teachers, pupils and school board were putting up with. *To be continued/...*



Post office 1897



CDHS is located at the **Casterton Visitor Information Centre**
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Casterton 3311
Phone: 5581 2070

To visit the Casterton Community Museum:
call **David Coventry** on **5581 2475** or email at davidccoventry@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

CDHS Minutes, 1968

20th March, 1968

A most interesting talk was given by Mr. Ellis TICHLER of Brit Brit, a member of the Balmoral Historical Society in "Shipwrecks along the coast".

Mr. TICHLER said that shipping was very important in the early days when roads and bridges were non-existent and that ships formed a vital link in the daily well-being of the settlers.

Mr. TICHLER covered the Ports from 1802 to the end of the century and many vessels "Casino", "Devon", "Ardmella", "Marina" and many others.

On 1844 "Casterton News" loaned by Mrs. RANKIN had advertisements covering service of these vessels.

15th May, 1968

An interesting talk was given by Mr. Jack GORMAN on the 1946 floods and many photos were produced. This was the largest flood since 1906.

Members recalled experiences of 1946 floods. Mr. GORMAN has sent this paper to "Parade".

19th June 1968

A most interesting talk was given by Mrs. Bert NEWTON, assisted by Mrs. Connie LIVOCK, on the history of the RICHARDSON family of which they are descendent. The first wedding celebrated in Casterton was Mr. and Mrs. RICHARDSON in 1851, married at the Glenelg Inn by Father LOWHAM. Mary Ann, the first of their 10 children was the first white child born in Casterton.

Mr. RICHARDSON put the shingles on the Glenelg Inn in 1848, the year Casterton was ordained a township.

The first name was Crossing Place.

18th September 1968

Following the business meeting Mr. GORMAN gave a talk on James MALLET, one of the early settlers who came from Tasmania to the Western District in 1845 - encountered blacks when coming through Heywood and Hotspur - was then known as Emu Creek.

Mr. McLeod ROPER gave a talk on the early days of Dunrobin, Dergholm and Murndal and Mr. ROPERS excellent memory gave us reports on many well-known district families and properties.

20th November, 1968

Mr. Arthur ASTBURY, guest speaker, gave a most interesting address on the early days of Dergholm which is over 100 years old. His family descended from J S ASTBURY of "AFTON" England, founder of the method of putting the gloss on pottery and china. Other members of the family settled in Avoca.

Early settlers names mentioned were LEVISON, MALLEE, GIBSON, FOSTER, DILLON, TURNER, HOWLETT, COTTER, JOVE, MCPHEE, MCDONALD, ROULSTON, MCNAMARA, SHAW, WOMBWELL, LAIDLAW and QUINN.

The Dergholm hotel was opened in 1850 or before. Casterton was named after the town of the same name in England. Harrow after the former English school. Dergholm was originally DARSCHOLM.

REDCAP was named after the cricketers. There were many aborigines at Dergholm in the early days.

(notes: named after Tommy REDCAP, Aboriginal cricketer)

Issue No. 41 Archival Access Victoria

Bringing the Victorian Archives to you...

Introducing 'House History Victoria'

Since the release of the digitised land title records at PROV I've accessed, downloaded and delivered over 130 digitised titles for researchers - and with such an interest in these records I decided to make them more of a focus. And what better way than a whole new website!

I've started up [House History Victoria](http://www.househistoryvictoria.com.au) to put the focus on title records and what they can reveal about a property's history. There is a blog on the website which I'll be updating weekly with details of a specific property somewhere in Victoria - I have researched three properties already, you can see what I've found [here](#).

As an introductory offer - all subscribers to my email get a discount...I'll get the titles for up to three properties for only \$20. Hope to hear from you (see one of my [previous blog posts](#) regarding title details and probate files to generate some ideas)

CDHS WEBSITE: we are the Web, visit us at

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