

Casterton and District
Historical Society Inc
Newsletter

DECEMBER 2014

Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum



NEXT MEETING:

Wed 17th December, meeting. Raffle draw and Christmas break-up. Please bring a small plate and drinks.

7.00 pm at the RSL.

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Thank you for your interest in the Casterton Historical Society and membership - all best wishes for a very happy Christmas and New Year.

FUND RAISING

The raffle will be drawn at this meeting before Christmas. The prize is a \$100 voucher from Foodworks. Sales have been very good and will help us get



Selling at the Show



"The Williamstown Chronicle" (Vic.) Saturday, 29th May 1920.
An Early Settler --- one of Williamstown's pioneers.

Mr. W. A. Hall, of Spensley-street, Clifton Hill, has forwarded us the diary of his late father, Mr. William Hall, junr. (late of Parker-street). It is a most interesting document, and from it we extract the following :-- continued/...

As we were nearing the border, we had to encounter some very boggy country called Break Pole Marsh. Here the bullocks got bogged, so had to partly unload. We then dragged the drays by ropes, fastened to the trees. This was slow progress. While at the Marsh, and having some leisure time, we picked out a smooth bark gum tree, and cut deeply with my pocket knife, "Break Pole Marsh, 1845," which would last for many years before the letters were overgrown. On September 28, 1845, we squatted down on the bank of a large swamp teeming with wild fowl, geese and swans. We had been travelling six weeks, and were glad to find that we were at the end of our journey--about 300 miles from Melbourne. Our nearest neighbor's (John Wood Beilby) cattle station was 12 miles away. Thus was the founding of the Kaladbro Station on the border.

Mr. Alfred Bates lost but little time before he was on his way on horse-back to Adelaide to apply for a squatting license, to occupy. He was not away many days, and after a short rest started for Melbourne to make similar application, thinking it necessary, as probably a portion of the country he desired to occupy might be in each colony. A Mr. McKinnon was anxious to form a station and Mr. Bates knew this. In a few days after forming camp I was informed, just about breakfast time, that the sheep had strayed from the cattle and could not be seen. I started off with my dog to try and find them, passing swamps and over ridges of timbered, grassy land, until several miles had been travelled.

On arrival at the limestone ridges, kangaroos were very numerous, which were a great attraction to the dog. The ground being so hard, the sheep could not be tracked any further, nor would the dog scent them. I thought it best to try and get back to camp. I started to retrace my steps till at length I was afraid I had gone too far and had passed the tent. On my way to Adelaide, a thought crossed my mind that I may be south of the track which led from Glenelg River (some where near where Casterton is now) to Mount Gambier, and by going north I would likely come to such track. Judging the time of the day by the sun, I journeyed north to the best of my judgment.

About two hours before sunset I arrived at the track, then I paused and had to consider whether I should go east or west. By going east I would go towards the River Glenelg (a distance, say, of 20 miles), or by turning west would be going for Mount Gambier, about 25 miles. However, I decided to go west, both in hope and fear--hoping that I might see something I should recognise, and fearing lest I should fall into the hands of some hostile blacks. In due time I came across the tracks of the bullock drays where they had turned off from the main track and the blazed trees.

On December 3, 1845, we took possession of another run, or station, about 12 miles north towards Lake Wallace. We had not been long there before the supply of tea was exhausted. We then had recourse to roasting flour in our three- legged pot as a substitute for coffee or tea. The sheep being lost and never recovered, the



Noel demonstrates the art of salesmanship

Clean-up at the Old Cemetery

Ongoing, when requested, for the morning tea and unveiling of the board of names of the unmarked graves.

KENT'S CORNER:

Copies available at the VIC of Volume 2: **Roamin' Round the Town** the Visitor Information Centre: cost is \$25.

Henty Street /Tyers Street corner /McKinlays
Glenelg Inn 1873



Henty Street - 1890s



party, pretty well straitened for meat, had to kill a calf and salt a portion of it. The cattle being a store lot, we had no milk, neither butter nor vegetables, so had to makeshift with the calf meat, flour, sugar and salt till some stores, men and flocks came from the home station, Duck Ponds.

One day I was left in charge of the camp. My two mates in the forest, splitting, got alarmed on hearing a good and frequent report of firearms, and returned quickly, fearing I was firing at the blacks. It was found that the firing was from a party from Adelaide. This party consisted of the South Australian Governor, Lieut.-Col. F. H. Robe, and his suite, beating the borders of the colony. The party was accompanied to our camp by a distant neighbor's overseer, who had informed His Excellency that he might expect a good supply of milk, but they were sorely disappointed. The visitors were informed that the new station had run out of tea. They were not generous enough to offer any, but quickly went on their journey, no doubt greatly disappointed through not getting any milk.

Soon after the time above narrated, I was sent on horseback with a pair of blankets to a newly-formed station some miles away. I was to deliver the blankets and bring back a supply of tea. Directions were given to ride northward until I came to the main Adelaide track, on reaching which I was to go along it westward toward the desert and Adelaide for a mile or two, keeping a good look-out to the right. I might then expect to see the station. I had not gone far on my journey before a thick fog came on. I had crossed the track, as I supposed. It was only a splitter's leading to some timber. I then determined to return to the track, and follow it westward.

On I rode, and, as darkness was approaching, the track entered into country almost knee deep in water, so I determined upon returning to a ridge of dry ground, where I had to spend the night without fire or food, holding the rein of my horse throughout the weary night. At daylight I decided to journey on through the water for about half a mile. Having got on to dry ground and going a mile or so further, and looking well to the right, as I was told, I saw the station buildings, the place I was in search of.

Delivering the blankets and getting some tea to take back, then, having a good wash as a refresher, also a good breakfast, mounted my horse, and, taking judgment by the sun, started homeward as such was called. When a few miles had been traversed, the horse began to plunge in a bog nearly knee deep. A fear now came over me that my horse would stick fast and leave me to tramp my way--many miles--to reach my mates. Luckily, we got safely through the bog, and arrived at our camping place before dark, to the relief of my mates, who were afraid that I had got into the hands of the blacks or lost myself.

Having got a supply of tea, there was no need of roasting flour for coffee. Soon after the events above narrated, and a slab hut built, a tribe of blacks--men, women and children--and a goodly number of dogs, passed by. There appeared about 50, and we numbered only three. A few of the men approached the hut begging sugar, flour and 'baccy.' They hung about the hut door, looking in. My mates guarded the door while I prepared the firearms. The blacks, on seeing this preparation, soon made their way back to the tribe, so there was no strife with them. Not long after this the cattle strayed and could not be found. I made a black-fellow understand that I wanted to find cattle, so the two of us started off--he as tracker--and recovered the cattle.

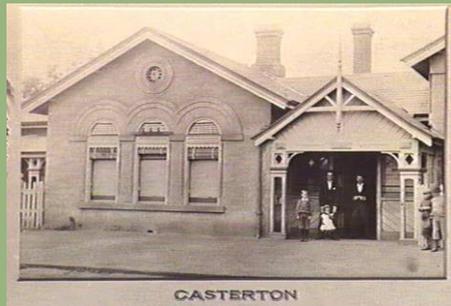
This was in the early part of 1846. The shearing being over at the head station, Lara, flocks of sheep, provisions and men were sent away to the new settlement. Other squatters soon came with cattle, sheep and men, so the country around became settled, our nearest neighbors being Messrs. L. McKinnon, McCallum Brothers, McIntyre, McLellan, and John Wood Beilby.

The first white woman to come on Bates' station was a Mrs. Mulloch, shepherd's wife. She came from Portland, and had two little boys. She was sent to an out-station as cook, or hutkeeper, for her husband and another shepherd, as it was usual to have two flocks at an out-station. Mrs. Mulloch assisted to remove the hurdles for yarding the sheep every night

Next issue, final instalment.



post office 1897
Casterton Community Museum



Casterton Historical Society
50th Anniversary, 2014

In 2014 CDHS celebrates fifty years

CDHS is located at the

Casterton Visitor

Information Centre

e-mail: [castertonhistorical@](mailto:castertonhistorical@hotmail.com)

hotmail.com

PO Box 48, Casterton 3311

Phone: 5580 2070



George Bills



A Bills water trough – note the little trough on the right for the doggies.

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
e-mail: roscov48@bigpond.com
H tel 5581 2875

Having a Whale of a Time by Jim Kent

A chance glance at a small article in a paper was the trigger for this article on whaling, the hunting and killing of these monstrous sea creatures for return from the components of their carcasses. It was written by a body generally referred to as “greenies” and it went on to heavily criticize the Japanese whale hunters. What caused me to grin a bit was the fact that it was only in 1978 that we in Australia stopped hunting whales for the oil, prior to fossil fuels becoming available. Oil was used for illuminating homes and the lubrication of machinery.

William Dutton In 1832 established a whaling industry in the bay of Portland sixty miles south of Casterton. Prior to this he was in command of a team of men who hunted and killed seals for the products derived from them. He landed in Portland in 1828 where he built the very first house and he lived there until 1868. He died in 1878 and is buried in Narrawong cemetery.

In a general sense Portland is believed to have been started by the Henty brothers. This is not so. In 1833 Edward Henty took shelter in this bay when on a return trip from his family holdings on the west coast of Western Australia. He returned in 1834 with his brothers and began a whaling and commercial business in the embryo township. When Major Thomas Mitchell came upon the Henty brothers in Portland he told them of the beautiful pasture land to the north and the brothers made post haste to establish farming interests on the virgin land – and the rest is history.

A few years ago when I was in WA I had the good fortune to stay in the port of Albany for some time, a fascinating old city with some extremely interesting museums, some linked to a military past, some to sandalwood, but most interesting was the old whaling station which ceased operating only 36 years ago. In its heyday three huge modern whale hunting ships operated from this port in the Southern Ocean, a vast improvement on the open boat and hand delivered harpoons that Dutton and the Hentys used. One of these whale ships is restored and tied up at the whaling station wharf where it forms part of the fascinating museum.

Over the twenty years of operation from Albany 14,000 whales were killed and processed at the huge factory, the products being oil and bone. Today we are criticizing the Japanese for hunting the creatures for food. I am not in any way approving of the venture and my intense sympathies lie with the great sea creatures. Because we have seen fit not to continue the slaughter doesn't really mean we can read the riot act to other nations.

In the Albany museum are reconstructed skeletons of whales and there is a picture theatre inside one of the massive oil storage tanks which shows films of the industry which once took place in the precincts of the museum. Do not miss this museum if you are in the southern part of WA. The whale chasing started there in the early 1800s. Around 300 ships mainly of American origin were operating along the southern coastline until the 1860s when the petroleum industry reduced the demand for whale oil. In 1912 a Norwegian company began operating the on the WA coast using steam powered sips with harpoon guns. WW1 saw this venture close down. In 1952 a local company started up again in Albany using the most modern of ships and with a huge processing factory. The sighting of whales was done by spotter aircraft which directed the ships to their presence.

Responding to local pressure the Cheynes company processed its last whale in 1978, after which it closed the doors. Mainly through the work of volunteers and the Jaycees community foundation today we are fortunate to be able to visit this now famous attraction with one of the whale ships moored alongside. Just 50 kilometres up the road is the town of Denmark which has an incredible array of ancient and modern barometers.

Our district also has a connection with Denmark by way of the Nichol sisters whose ancestors build the first bark store in Sandford and later a huge stone built store with two storied weatherboard house attached. Twenty five years ago when the old store started to fall down I demolished it and built a stone wall and gate pillars as the entrance to my new house. I sandblasted two of the beautiful red ironstones and send them over to Margaret and Lexie Nichols in Denmark as a memento of their ancestors' old store and they have them in their garden.

CDHS WEBSITE: we are the Web, visit us at

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