

# Historical Happenings

Casterton Community Museum



**NEXT MEETING: Wed. 15th  
APRIL at the RSL at 2.30pm.**

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## **FUND RAISING**

Our raffle held in the month before Christmas was a great success for the Society, raising the funds needed to complete the digitization of the Glenelg Shire rate books which is presently being completed by SouthWest Imaging.

## **Working bee at the Old Cemetery**

To prepare for the morning tea and unveiling of the board of names of the unmarked graves on **Sunday, 19<sup>th</sup> April**. Working bee on **Sunday 12th April** from 10am. ALL WELCOME.



Selling tickets at the Show

An idea occurs to me that could become a pleasant social occasion for our Society. Some time back I wrote about the amazing artistry of the unknown person who used a chainsaw on the side of the huge limb that had fallen from the top of Bilstons Tree to carve an incredible number of likenesses of native animals and birds. I sent this with a photo to the Outback magazine, an up-market offshoot of the R M Williams conglomerate, where it was published.

Our Society could take a trip out to the site and picnic in the beautiful Australian bush, going either in our own vehicles or in a small bus our hospital hires out. The route could be via Noss Road and the Hummocks Road where we can take in the view from the western aspect of these famous hills which are said to be the oldest in the world. I can seek permission from Stephen Harding, the current owner of The Hummocks, so that could go to the floor of the now disused quarry where the previous Shire of Glenelg once obtained its road-making materials.

Many years ago when I ran the annual Old Car Rally for our local vintage car club one of the items on the agenda was a visit to The Hummocks. On another, Bilstons Tree was the destination for one hundred and thirty cars and crews. Before we went there our members took considerable time tidying up the area around this magnificent specimen of River Red Gum claimed to be largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

The walking track into the area is not in the best condition and I would seek permission to drive into the area where the tree stands. It would be twenty five years since I was there with a car rally and not far away stands another interesting tree blown over in a wet winter, the top taking root so that it resembles a boomerang with growth out of the ground at both ends. The ground in this Brimboal district is notoriously boggy, so it would be advisable to go there after the month of June.

Around the old railway station precinct, derelict old wattle trees and fallen branches have been cleaned up. These on the southern fence



Our pin up boards make for a great display of old photographs.

**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



line caused quite a problem with their roots causing blockages to the nearby pipe which goes to the main sewerage pipe in Tuckett Street. When the late Aub Baxter and I planted the trees in front of the station there were no sewerage pipes anywhere in Casterton.

Back in the days when the railway was in operation the road came westerly up Tuckett Street and crossed in front of the station then out to Jackson and Watham Street. It has been a sore point with me for many years that we have a ridiculous blockage of Jackson Street by way of the land under Victrack control. You have only to watch the after school melee to see the fearful tangle of school buses, parent vehicles, children on foot, bikes, skateboards and scooters that all charge into the considerable traffic coming up from the northern side of McPherson Street and into Henty Street.

One day I believe there could be a tragic accident at this junction - which could be alleviated of danger by the opening up Jackson Street and a return to the outlet of Tuckett Street, at the front of the station. It seems unlikely that this will happen in the near future, but when and if a tragedy occurs lamentations will be heard loud and long.

Things are moving slowly and surely at the Casterton New Cemetery with the \$20,000 new project to increase lawn burial sites. Just recently the cemetery was the recipient of a substantial donation from the Casterton Pipes and Drums Band, a four-figure cheque, gratefully received. Perhaps our own Society could consider some form of donation. We recently contributed a four-figure cheque to the income of certain "legal eagles" with little or nothing to show for it.

Jim Kent

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**NEWS from PROV:** Public Record Office Of Victoria

**World War 1 soldier settlers come to life with 'Battle to Farm'**  
ANZAC commemorative website launch



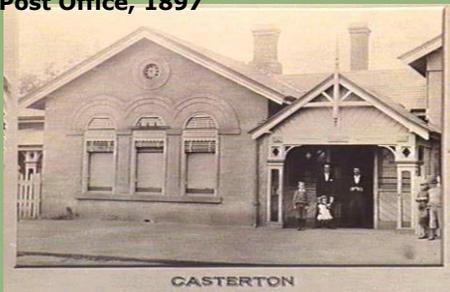
Earlier this week, Parliamentary Secretary to Special Minister of State Shaun Leane MP unveiled our important new website for historical and family research.

*Battle to Farm* enables public access to 10,000 government records on the Victorian Soldier Settlement Scheme. The scheme helped settle thousands of returned World War One soldiers on farming land across Victoria through government leases, drastically transforming the landscape of regional Victoria. See videos and an interactive map.



**Casterton Community Museum**

**Post Office, 1897**



**Casterton Historical Society  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 2014**

In 2014 CDHS celebrated fifty years: the first meeting was held in April 1964.

CDHS is located at the **Casterton Visitor Information Centre**  
e-mail: [castertonhistorical@hotmail.com](mailto:castertonhistorical@hotmail.com)

PO Box 48, Casterton 3311  
Phone: 5580 2070



**Wando Vale threshing machine circa 1915**

**Visit the Casterton Community Museum:**

Call **David Coventry** on **5581 2475**  
or email at [davidcoventry@yahoo.com.au](mailto:davidcoventry@yahoo.com.au)  
**Evelyn Pevitt: 5581 1206** or  
**Heather Mullen: 5581 1666**

CDHS WEBSITE: we are the Web, visit us at

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

To contribute to this newsletter, contact Ros at the Visitor Information Centre

**Do you want to see your research published?**

FINAL CALL for submissions for Provenance



Have you been researching your family or town? Or have you delved deeper into some of our crime files? Maybe you've found some interesting records related specifically to your area of study - such as law or architecture. Then why not write about it?

**Submit** your research article to the 2015 edition of Provenance before the 4th of May.

**Dig the Archives at the Victorian Archives Centre Open Day**

Registrations are now open for this 2 May event

*The Victorian Archives Centre is opening its doors and inviting everyone to Dig the Archives on our annual open day. Come along on the 2nd of May to hear fascinating talks, tours and training sessions about archival discoveries.*

*Guest speakers include journalist and author Gideon Haigh, Ancestry.com.au's Ben Mercer, author and historian Liz Rushen, along with plenty of other research specialists and story tellers.*

*This event is free and only comes round once a year! Check out the [schedule](#).*

**Casterton News: February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1957**

One family has been in charge of **Wando Vale Post Office** for almost 57 years, from the day it was opened in July, 1900 until it closed last week. When Wando Vale settlement was opened, the first closer settlement in Victoria, Mr T C Tomkins, was the first postmaster. After his death in 1908, his widow, Mrs Christine Tomkins, took over and with her daughters carried on until her death in 1937. She was succeeded by her daughter, Grace. Mrs T Doyle, was followed in 1944 by Mrs E B Tomkins until the office was closed.

Mrs E B Tomkins is the widow of Mr T C Tomkins' only son Peter. The original Post Office and Mrs Christine Tomkin's home were destroyed by fire in March 1909, three months after the death of her husband. It was jokingly said that any girl who assisted at the post office was sure to get married and facts bear this out. Mrs Christine Tomkins was assisted first by her daughter Margaret, who was married to Mr B Storie, son of one of the original settlers. Next assistant was Miss Janet Tomkins, who was married to Mr T Davidson, also of Wando Vale. A third daughter Grace then took over and she was married to a son of one of the original settlers Mr T Dole, now of Casterton.

Mail was delivered twice a week. Contractors were Heard and Lane, who left Casterton at 7am on Tuesdays and Fridays with a coach and two horses on the trip to Harrow, returning next day. Later contractors to use horse and coach were Jim Hortle, Bill Heard, Nat Collins, Percy Heard, Frank Coxon, Bill Lyall and Bill Hooley. In 1915, following the big drought, horse feed was so scarce that contractor Percy Heard disposed of his horses and replaced them with a T Model Ford. Fodder was so scarce that hay, of inferior quality and high price, was imported from California. When feed became plentiful again, Heard returned to horse which were used until 1925, when Bill Hooley changed over to a one ton T Model and the days of the horse were over. The service became three times a week about 1914, and was a daily service when the office was closed.

In the early days as many as a dozen horses at a time would be seen hitched to the office fence while their owners talked as the mail was sorted. In 1918 the telephone exchange was opened with a 10-line manual board.