

Casterton and District  
Historical Society Inc  
Newsletter

JANUARY 2014

# Historical Happenings



Casterton Community Museum

## NEXT MEETING:

### **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. Volunteer workers will be needed to help clean up the area.

Meeting: **19<sup>th</sup> March, 630pm**, a **BBQ** to be held at Island Park, a change of venue from the VIC. Please bring a plate, salad or sweet, meat and drinks provided.

### **KENT'S CORNER:**

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

**Membership fees** for 2013-2014 remain the same: \$15 single and \$25 family. Due annually in August following AGM.

## MILLICENT BIG DAY OUT

Members had a marvelous day out, going via Mount Burr to Millicent, visiting the beautiful man-made lake, **Lake McIntyre**, a native bird and wildlife reserve area. We lunched in Millicent at the SE History Group centre, now in a former school - a lovely old building with a large and excellent historical library.

We saw an amazing collection of vintage clothing and a plus, the horse-drawn vehicles in the workshop. We did not have time to see all the museum and plan to return to do so. We returned, *tired but happy*, and much more knowledgeable. Many thanks go to our Millicent member, Noel Boyle, for his planning and guiding of our day.

**South East Family History Group:**  
<http://www.sefhq.org/>



Sandford shop 1981

## The Early History of Sandford

*as told by Mrs. Grogan, continued/*

*Copy donated to The Casterton & District Historical Society by Carol McKinnon-Ward 2006*

Mr. T. O. Evans was appointed to the position of school master, and during his regime the Common School merged into the present State School system with the introduction of free education in 1872.

It was deemed advisable to move the site of the school to a more central spot in 1875, and a then commodious brick school and residence were built in the middle of the growing community. That school is still being used although a new Infant Room had to be added in 1900 to accommodate the increased attendance. Schoolmaster Evans was succeeded by Mr. Wilson then came Mr. L.H. Renchan(?). And the last of the old school were Messrs. C. Radford who had entered the service of the Education Dept. that had charge of the S. School Sandford for 11 Years and C.W. Hill for 13 years the village Head Teacher. Both these gentlemen are now aged residents of Melbourne.

In 1866 Mr. Layley settled in Sandford as a shoe maker and in the following year opened a General Store on the site of the present Post Office. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 1873, Mr. Layley had the honor of laying the Foundation Stone of the Rechabite Hall. This hall was afterwards sold to the Ancient Order of Foresters and still is locally known as the 'Foresters Hall'.

On 21st June 1887, the late Mr. J.S. Anderson saddler, planted an Oak tree in front of this hall to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee of the late Queen Victoria, and it has grown into a magnificent and much prized memento of Forestry. Sandford owes its indebtedness to the late J.S. Anderson for a library. Through his energy and love of reading, he established 'Penny Readings' in the first place of amusement erected in Sandford and known as Nicholls Hall. The moneys he thus raised formed the nucleus for funds to build the present library and later, on the Mechanics Hall. The Foundation Stone of which was laid in 1885 by the late Mr. W.M. Bunt (?), landlord & Licensee of the Commercial Hotel.

Flour milling was started here by the Miller brothers from Coleraine, but being unsuccessful, sold out to the late Mr. Peter Learmonth of Hamilton. He engaged Mr. John Holmes as manager and later on his brothers George and William joined him and eventually purchased the mill.

The Holmes Bros soon built up a reputation for the high quality of their stone ground-silk dresser flour and things boomed in those days. When the roller-milling came into operation, Holmes Bros closed up and



Sacred Heart Pupils c 1911



Henty Street / Tyers Street corner  
Glenelg Inn 1873



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

removed to Casterton. They commenced the brass band which is now known as the Vice Regal Band and for many years the majority of the members were the Holmes Bros and their sons.

A rabbit trimming business was carried on in the old mill by the Winton Bros until the place was mysteriously destroyed by fire. The butter factory was removed about the same time to Casterton, and the reverses they experienced have never been overcome. The early settlers did all their business and trade with Portland by means of bullock drays, horse and cart and coach, and as there was no local council, the Portland Road Board had to maintain and look after all the roads. Things were greatly changed when the railway from Branxholme to Casterton was opened in Sept 1884.

The Roman Catholic Church was the first place of worship built in the village and was completed by the late Mr. Jas Mc Cormack in 1866. The Rev Father Marshall was the first parish priest stationed here. Then in 1883 the Presbyterian Church was opened by the Rev Mr. Mc Millan of Hamilton – the Rev Mr. Gillespie of Coleraine being the nearest minister to conduct the church services afterwards. The Church of England was opened by January 1888, the vicar of Christ Church Casterton being the first minister of St. Mary's Sandford.

In the very early days, Sandford was noted for its horse races. The famous Great Western Steeplechase was finished in the Main St of today and the prize amounted to £150. Adam Lindsay Gordon, poet, politician and noted horseman rode in that race one year; but his horse refused to jump for him and he lost, Ned Gurry being declared the winner. The Race-Course now occupied was once part of the Recreation Reserve adjoining it. The grants were issued for them in 1886 and 1887 respectively.

In the seventies and eighties Mr. W. Storie who arrived from Portland in 1860 grew splendid samples of wheat; but latterly Oats and Barley are the chief cereals grown. Dairy herds have recently taken largely the place of the sheep- mixed with farming and dairying being the general occupation of the present day Sandford.  
Mrs M I Grogan

Minutes of CDHS meetings from 1966  
17<sup>th</sup> February, 1966

Miss LEAKE read from the life of Rachel HENNING, an interesting extract. Mr. GORMAN played tape readings from "Pioneering Days in Western Victoria" by J C HAMILTON. Mr. Barry KENT was able to tell anecdotes of J C HAMILTON whom he remembered many years ago. The readings were about Benyeo, (near Apsley) and about Kadnook (Edenhope) station. Originally there were about 30,000 acres, also recorded were the stories of a trip to Portland in 1848 with wool (1/- a lb, and some 8), the early days of Cobb and Co from 1854 onwards. The petrified black fellow found in the Naracoorte caves and the first sign of the Lake at Bringalbut – 10/5/1846. Also David EDGAR, Pine Hills, Harrow. Mrs. K EDGAR then read letters from David EDGAR (Grand Uncle of Mr. Keith EDGAR) written in 1875 of his trip from Melbourne to Harrow. Dr JOSKE read an interesting account of the S Lagoon, written by D'OMBRAIN, son of Dr D'OMBRAIN who practiced in Casterton about the turn of the century.



