



Castlemaine Pioneers and Old Residents' Association Inc.

Reg. No. A 0006803 W Est. 1880.

Faulder Watson Hall & Old Telegraph Station 208 Barker Street, Castlemaine.

• President: Russell Sheehan 5472 3285 • Secretary: Wilson Bunton 5472 3186 •

All welcome to meetings held on third Thursday of each month at 7.30 pm. Annual Subs: \$30.00.

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Newsletter – February 2021.

Monday January 25th 2021, The Old Telegraph Station, Barker St Castlemaine. Weather wise, a brutishly extra hot summers day, with a fierce north wind. Here we are with the first newsletter and much to write about. December saw a fine convoy of cars conveying as handsome a group of members that one could wish to see, off on a poker run with a twist, finishing at the gardens for a Christmas tea. Starting at the Burke & Wills monument the first two cards were dealt. After a run around the north end of town and admiring some of the old buildings, our convoy turned left into Merryfield St stopping just over Barkers Creek, once the site of Rowe's Windsor Gardens. A plant nursery, pleasure garden and casino and another card was dealt. Turning into Burnett Rd past Pine Hill, once the home of our great late treasurer Dr. Ken Leversha, (time for one of Kens jokes) *two young boys at a wedding, one asked the other "how many wives can a man have? "16" was the reply, "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer"*. On to Froomes Rd which becomes Mary St, the convoy stopped at the site of an old pub The Cricketers Arms at Wattle Flat. It was here that a Castlemaine cricket team beat an English Test team. David Bailie gave a great colourful description of how the Castlemaine team, very skilfully demolished the Pom's by keeping them well plied with food and grog, as well as fielding a team of 22. Another card was dealt here and we then proceeded to our final stop, the gardens opposite the Mill where the final card to complete the poker hand was dealt. With our picnic hampers, chairs etc we set up camp under a big shady tree. The Botanical Gardens are absolutely magnificent. Lots of people with their children and dogs, all enjoying them, yet not getting in one another's way. We all settled down eating, drinking, talking and just enjoying the company. Four of our members whose roots go right back to early Castlemaine, David, Robin, Lindsay & Vin started talking about the old days, of events and people from 1950's up to recent times, with many of the others joining in. It was one of those spontaneous

moments, that just happen, my only regret, I did not have the tape recorder with me. Now back to the poker game. A table was cleared, and each hand dealt to the different cars was invited to discard two and get replacements, (when you are using this as a fund raiser, this is where the bulk of the funds are raised). As each group looked at their cards I saw chagrin or huge smiles. I then reminded them that this game had a twist, the twist....."the lowest card wins, not the best hand", O'h what a difference this made to some facial expressions. Robin Taylor with the 2 of clubs won the 1 kilo bag of cherries from Blackwood Cherries at Harcourt North, and "Top Shelf Chocolates" out of the Biscuit Tin account were then handed around. With the frivolities over, our new President Russell Sheehan took over the proceedings, making two presentations. The first a cheese board and knife, to past president Barry, recognising his sterling effort, as President for the past 17 years. The second, a lovely set of stemless wine glasses, went to that hard working secretary Wilson, recognising his stint of acting treasurer for the last four years. Now I have the wine glasses, I need to convince the committee to pay me a salary, to buy wine to fill them. As the sun set in the West, we wended our separate ways home. After experiencing a magical evening, a nice end to an unusual year.

A look at the new committee:

President: Russell Sheehan.

Vice President: Graeme Barry.

Secretary: Wilson Bunton.

Treasurer: Garry Hood.

Committee:

Vin Cappy

Judy Eastwood.

Trevor Skill.

Chris Simmins

The Executive: The President, Vice President and Treasurer.

Christmas came & Christmas went and Dreadful 2020 left us, we welcomed in 2021 with high hopes for a better year. Our first event was a great success. It is our custom to hold our first meeting (February), not in the Telegraph Station, but at another place of historical interest. This year we chose the Art and Historical Museum in Dunolly. A large group of members with their cars gathered at the Maldon Gardens, and under the shade of a mighty oak tree enjoyed a picnic tea. Even though it had been a warm day, the evening was delightful, making the scenic drive from Maldon to Dunolly very pleasant. I have driven through Dunolly many times over the years, but never entered the museum. What an eclectic collection, covering many areas and interests. John our host, was very knowledgeable, helpful and affable. He and I shared our experiences of being part of a historical group and the way it operates. It was a common story, the lack of younger members to carry on the good and hard work past and present members have put in, preserving our past. Finally we had to leave this fabulous collection and head for home. Late evening the early stars and the Southern cross appearing in the sky, no man made lighting to destroy their brilliance, made for a magical drive home. Another great outing enjoyed by all. Speaking of outings, "The Annual Excursion" is nigh, Wednesday 17th February. This year it will be a self drive affair to Bendigo. Suggest that we car pool and that you sort out who travels with who, picking up at the door. Itinerary: 1. A grand old home that had a full page to itself in the Weekly Times in 1909, situated at Upper Harcourt. George Milford has arranged this from a tip I got from Melva Graham some years ago. Thankyou both. 2. A scenic drive to Bendigo. 3. Visit the Bendigo Pottery starting with lunch ranging from sandwiches to a full meal, you choose and pay. 4. A tour of the pottery \$6 each, you pay, followed by 30 minute browse in the Antique and Gift Shops. Finally we visit The Great Stupa finishing with afternoon tea before heading home. It would be nice if you would let me know if you are going, so that tables can be reserved for lunch. *Wilson*. Departure Time 9am sharp, from opposite the Castle Motel near the South School. This is a wheel chair friendly event. Now I am going to indulge myself by answering a couple of readers letters. Last year Cheryl wrote to me with an interesting

article about one of her ancestors, a Taylor. I thought the article was interesting and shared it with you. Cheryl lives at Wandana Heights, and I thought it to be a Posh Melbourne suburb. Wrong it's a Posh Geelong suburb and I was gently admonished. In the admonishment Cheryl describes herself and fellow Wandana brethren as "Pivotonians", suggesting that they are the centre of things. Well Cheryl, I don't agree. Castlemaine was named "The Great Centre" long, long ago, and the geographical Dead Centre of Victoria is only a few miles from Castlemaine. Even though those dastardly early map makers drew their maps to make Castlemaine look closer to Melbourne than Geelong for Melbourne's financial gain. I think Castlemaine is the pivot point. However I am open to discussion. Ed. Now Shirley from Kurunjang. Your suggestion that our computer wizard could perhaps feature some of our interesting historical items and put them up with their stories on our web page has been taken on board. A silver rowing cup and its story will be on the web page very soon. Also the two statues relating to Colonel Bull in the old Yandell house are still there. One day last week I received a call on my mobile. It was about 10am and it was a lady ringing from England, an Australian now living there. She has written a book based around one of her ancestors, who had lived at Kooroocheang near Werona. In the book she relates a sad story about the accidental arsenic poisoning of a child, by her ancestor. I had published this story based on the Mt Alexander Mail's report of the time, in this newsletter last year. This lady came across it and has offered to share her story with us. While on the subject of far away places, a Doctor in a South Korean University who is writing a book about Chinese doctors and herbalists in Australia also came across our newsletter. He has emailed asking about a Chinese herbalist who lived in Castlemaine in the 1800's. The "Chief" remarked "we seem to be getting around a bit perhaps it might be a good idea to tighten up your gramma and spelling". (I feel interesting times are ahead, living with a former proof reader). A further something from the M.A.M. 10 Dec 1856. *The Electric Telegraph. To the Editor- Sir, ever since Castlemaine has been a township, the great desideratum has been the "time of day"*.

It seems to me that a fine opportunity to supply this want, at a small expense now presents itself, by means of the electric telegraph, through the agency of which a time-ball fixed on the Telegraph Office here, might be dropped simultaneously with those at Melbourne and Williamstown. How this boon is to be obtained, perhaps you or some of your readers can suggest, - yours &c.

The want of a public time keeper in Castlemaine has long been a great inconvenience. Our correspondents suggestion is a good one, and we should think the Council might with propriety act upon it, and couple a time-ball with a town clock.
-Ed M.A.M.

The population in those far off times on the gold fields was supposedly to be mainly illiterate and ignorant. Yet the choice of words, phrases, style and fluency, used by the reporter and printed in the paper, a commercial operation, suggests otherwise. (just musing Ed).

Back in December George Dawson celebrated his 88th birthday, and we all wish him a belated "Happy Birthday". Over the last 4 months a number of our members have enjoyed large numbered birthdays, raising our average membership age quite considerably. So folks, at Easter, the Pioneers are going to have a membership drive. The fully re-furbished Telegraph Station will be open to the public, complete with inducements to join. It is also an opportunity for all you members who live in far off places, such as Kurunjang and Wandana Heights etc, to make a day to visit Castlemaine and the Old Telegraph Station in Barker St. To view our "Flash Harry" interior, browse through some of our collection. It will be open each day over Easter, 10am – 4pm. Castlemaine and its environs at Easter is a very nice place to visit. Autumn brings cool nights with perfect days. The autumn colours are spectacular along with our old buildings and gardens. How many of you know that Castlemaine and district was once a major a holiday destination advertised far and wide complete with large guest houses? That there were viable tourist operators operating out of Castlemaine, taking passengers to local beauty spots like Vaughan Springs, Chewton, the reservoir at Expedition Pass etc? These places are still great to visit and admire. I sincerely hope to meet some of you over Easter. Ed.

A quick run around the traps has shown me that you all seem to be travelling well, apart from the aches and pains that old age tends to bring. One event that I think is worth a mention is, three of our members celebrated almost on the same day, their 80th birthdays. Lois & Graeme Barry, along with my chief Barbara, Lois & Graeme also celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on the same day. Three very happy people. We as an organisation belong to a couple of umbrella organisations, The Royal Historical Society of Victoria, and The Mechanics Institute. One of the two alerted us to a scheme that would see the government arrange to digitise all old newspapers almost immediately as a lot of other countries do. A petition form supporting this great idea is available, however my chaotic filing system has failed me as to its details and I go to press tomorrow but as soon as I have details, **you will be informed.** This I believe is a very good and necessary step to take, as it would be a boon to those who are passionate about preserving our ancestors accomplishments, deeds and our Australian history.

Now about our Electric Telegraph Office 1857. Another important and most picturesque edifice which is nearly finished, and will be ready for operation in about a month. It is in a chaste Anglo- Italian style, and contains a vestibule for public notices, a receiving office for messages, an inner office, battery and store room, with necessary quarters, including parlor, two bedrooms, kitchen and out offices. The cost is £1,300. (Building Progress in Castlemaine- Trove.)

That's all from me for this month folks,
your hard working secretary and editor
Wilson.

ANNUAL EXCURSION

17th FEBRUARY 2021.

The first excursion was in 1885. A steam train to Port Melbourne, boarding one of the Bay steamers which took them to Sorrento, there they were taken by a narrow gauge steam train to the back beach for a paddle. Then it was back to the steamer and a trip across the Heads to Queenscliff, going ashore to enjoy the sights shops etc. Late afternoon it was back on board for the long journey home, arriving back in Castlemaine late that night. The excursion was a success with, paying its way and showed a small profit. Approximately 160 men, women and children attended this first trip to the seaside, which became an annual event right up to the early 1940's. It soon became so big that the committee had to hire the biggest paddle steamer on Port Phillip bay, firstly the Hygeia 1800 passengers then the Weeroona 2000 passengers.

TODAY'S ITINARARY.

9am Depart Castlemaine for Harcourt via Chewton Expedition Pass and the Old Calder Highway and on to a grand house at Upper Harcourt.

Then travel to the Bendigo Pottery via the North Face of Mt Alexander, Sedgewick, Spring Gully, the Bendigo Race Course coming to the Midland Highway at Epsom and turning right. The pottery is short was on the right with parking.

Leave the pottery and travel to Eaglehawk to The Great Stupa, after which coffee for those who want it and home.

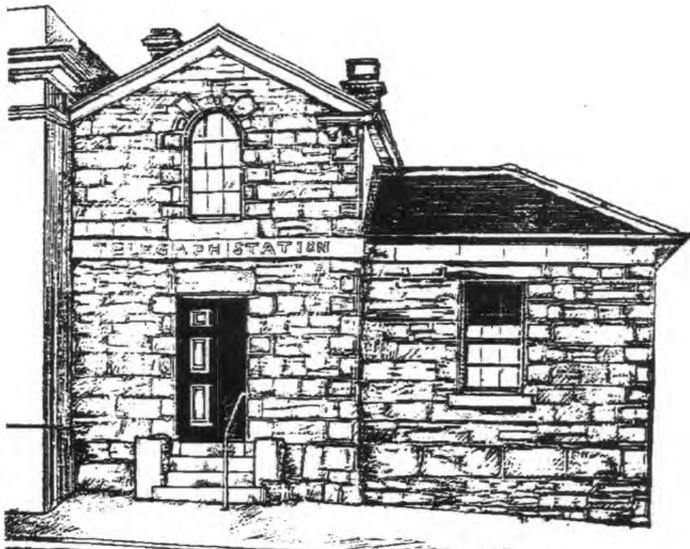
My mobile no 0408 176 597 . R.A.C.V. 11 11 13.

100 YEARS AGO, 26th JANUARY 1921.

The treasurer reported that the balance in the current account was £12-0-1d. A letter was received from solicitors to Sir William Zeal forwarding a cheque for £2-2-0, the half yearly allocation. This was acknowledged and a receipt forwarded. The secretary was authorised to procure a couple of glass bowls, for use in the members room. The secretary presented the Association with a framed photo of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, who visited Castlemaine on the 4th June 1920. The members suitably acknowledged the gift, by passing a vote of thanks to Mr. Taylor. An account of 30/- from Mrs. Mitchell was discussed at the meeting. This charge was the rate of 15/- per day, for two days work scrubbing the hall, rooms and passage. *(it was reported a couple of months ago that the sec was instructed to do this job, it seems he got*

his wife to do it). The sum of 10/- had been granted to Mrs. Mitchell in November, but she had deemed it to be of an insufficient remuneration. After some deliberation, it was considered 15/- per day was an over charge, that a further 10/- be given as full payment. *(the committee were Scrooges even then and it must have been interesting in the Mitchell house hold, the wife feeling she had been short changed and the husband part of the short changers Ed)* Accounts for payment Mr. Mitchell £2, 4 weeks salary. Mrs. Mitchell floor scrubbing 10/- Gas. Co. 9/11d. H.S. Shelton 10/6d. Newham Herald. 8/2d. Petty cash (sec) 4/-
50 YEARS AGO 1971.

Mr. E. Ottery in the chair and 14 members present Income \$50.5c. Expenditure \$47.70c. Mr. W. Sharp expressed his appreciation for the Christmas Party. Meeting closed 8 05 pm.



**Castlemaine Pioneers
and Old Residents' Association Inc.**

Next Monthly Meeting:

Thursday February 18th 2021 at 7-30pm

Please bring your mask.

At the Old Telegraph Station 208 Barker St. Castlemaine.

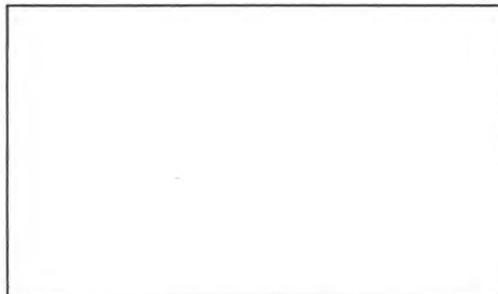
Guest Speaker

for this month members only .

Please bring your mask.

"it,s the virus Min, the dreaded virus"

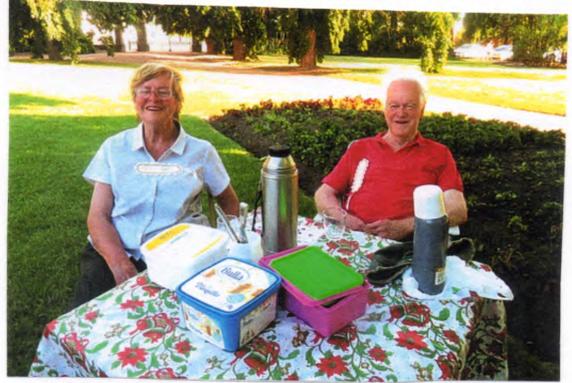
Pioneers and Old Residents' Association
208 Barker Street, Castlemaine 3450



A FEW OF THE MEMBERS AT PLAY TIME



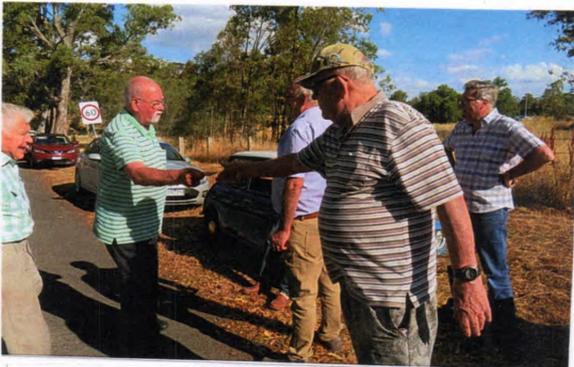
KEITH & JOY



MELVA & ANDY



TO MANY TO MENTION.



A HANDSOME QUINTET

starting on the right
David Wilson Russell
Garry & Graeme.

THE CRICKETERS ARMS

