



# 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 2023. 6 weeks to our 143<sup>rd</sup> birthday. *Excursion News!*

February 1<sup>st</sup> 2023, The Old Telegraph Station Barker St Castlemaine. Weather, a beautiful late summers day, light cloud a gentle south breeze. Yes folks the first month of summer has been and gone. 2022 for the Pioneers was, what is called in the wine industry, a *Good Year*. A year where the wine put down, will turn out to be an exceptional vintage. The long awaited three times cancelled 3 day Transport Exhibition finally came to pass. Excellent reports all round. Good attendance figures, a happy treasurer, some new members, and we educated a lot of new people to the Shire about the past and the future. Speaking about the past & future *The Annual Excursion*. Short notice I know, so listen up! *On February 20 1884, a committee of Pioneers and Old Citizens inaugurated the first excursion. The first trip taking place on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March following the route from Castlemaine to Williamstown by rail, thence to Queenscliff and Sorrento by the steamer "Lonsdale". This rail and boat excursion was the start of an annual outing.* (our 1930 Jubilee Book). Recent floods put the kibosh on the proposed Silo Art tour, so it was decided to go back in time and revisit where it all began *Queenscliff* this year. A few years ago we did an excursion to Queenscliff, visiting the Maritime Museum in Geelong, the Vietnam Military Museum next door and the very beautiful Geelong Gardens. This time a totally new itinerary. Travelling in a "Flash Harry 47 seat coach", fully air conditioned, morning tea (included in the price). The places we will visit (not in order) an Art Exhibition on the Queenscliff pier (been running since November last year finishes this April). Local Historic Society in their newly refurbished building. The new Ferry Terminal where we will be having lunch, cost \$30. A scenic tour of old Queenscliff, buildings and vantage points. Visit to Point Lonsdale and if time permits a stop off at the Marine & Freshwater Centre. The 2 times that are important for you to know are!!! Are Departure --- 8am from the Market Building. Return --- 5pm back at the Market Building.

How much for this whiz bang fantastic day out? I hear you all asking. Folks my typing finger is trembling, the price is so ridiculously low. Only \$50 each. Two people in an average car could not do the round trip for that. The coach seats 47. If we fill all seats we make a small profit. So ask a friend to come along. Lets make this a humdinger of an excursion, one that will be remembered for years to come. To you new members, come along take part in a tradition that has been part of Castlemaine's history for the past 139 years. There was a break of a few years when the Americans in 1942 requisitioned the last bay paddle steamer the 2000 passenger *Werroona* by turning it into a hospital ship, sending it up to New Guinea. On that first excursion 1884, approximately 120 men, women and children went aboard the *Lonsdale*. It was not long before the Pioneers booked the whole steamer, moving on to the "Ozone" the "Hygeia" (1800 passengers) and finally the "Werroona" (2000 passengers). The committee always held £200 in reserve as a safe guard in case the wheels came off. Trains and paddle steamers had to be paid in advance. 3 seven carriage trains and the complete hiring of the biggest paddle steamer on the bay, did not come cheap. A lot of people who had left Castlemaine to live in and around Melbourne bought tickets, so they could spend the day catching up with family and friends. These excursions were always a financial success. At the December meeting each year £200 was put aside for next year, the remainder distributed to various charities in the town Today we would like to break even. So throw caution to the wind visit the seaside, retrace the steps and good times of those old time pioneers and book your seat.

### LUNCH DETAILS

Choose from the following, mains & sweets.  
Fish, chips & salad. Scone, with jam & cream.  
Falafel Salad Bowl. Fresh fruit Salad.  
Chicken salad wrap, chips. Caramel Slice.  
Cornish Pasty, cips & salad. Carrot cake & cream  
Drink. Choice of Tea / Coffee, Juice Soft Drink.

Special diets catered for.

*Excursion Date 15<sup>th</sup> February.*

A lot of time has passed since the last newsletter, there is much to report and cover. I am very rusty at the keyboard, the gremlins are having a ball.

The Christmas Breakup by all accounts was a great success, Barry Palmer and Leah were great entertainers, President Russell made a good M.C. and Madam Vice President was in her element. The raffles were popular with some very special and good prizes. All in all it was a great night and Buda made some money, (the poor hard working secretary U.P. missed 3 Christmas Nosh Ups thanks to Mr. Covid). Speaking of the secretary, back in 1890 the secretary's position became vacant. A new one was appointed and paid the handsome salary of £12 a year.

Our financial Guru and treasurer, Gary reliably informs me that in today's money it would equate to a few thousand dollars. "Now where is this going" I hear you ask? As I have previously indicated at the end of this financial year, *my race will have been run, my days in the sun are over, it is time, in the words of that Slim Dusty song "put him out in the long yard, with the old and baldy grey"*. At the A.G.M. in July, the fantastic job of secretary will become vacant. I have given all you keen contenders for this plum roll, the "Heads Up", so you can gather your supporters for your run for office. Good Luck to you all.

For those of you who read the Midland Express, you will be aware that The Old Telegraph Station we all love, has taken a giant leap into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This beautiful old 1857 sandstone building was once at the forefront of communication technology 166 years ago. It has now caught up with the times by connecting to the N.B.N. Becoming alive again. It has seen the development of the mobile phone, the smart phone, the development of space communication and more. Today we take all this for granted. However it was that little electric impulse, the small copper wire wrapped around a porcelain insulator on a pole coupled together with man and a Morse code key. That is where it all began. Our Telegraph Station must be feeling very smug now that it is once again at the forefront of today's modern communication technology. We are very lucky to be its custodians and the history inside it.

Cass has uploaded all of our newsletters since 1988 onto our website. Russell and Gary will be getting some tuition from Cass re updating the site on a regular basis.

While on the subject of computers, it would be nice if one or two people would like to come along on a Wednesday afternoon, to help with our archiving. There are two jobs using computers, waiting to be done. One putting a water mark on many of our pictures. A simple but tedious job but a very important one. The other, naming and identifying on a computer some of the items in our collection. You won't be thrown in the deep end, there will be tuition.

The Significance Assessment examination of our collection, was very detailed and thorough.

We now have a handle on what we have and its importance to the Big Picture. The old boys didn't have much time for cataloguing and methodically storing what they collected (and they were good collectors). Their main interest was the maintenance of the historic property's deeded to the Association. 2013 saw a change of direction. The government of the day took over our Trusteeships (I believe we still are the Trustees of the Diamond Gully Cemetery). Under the skilful guidance of members Libby and Tom Luke, our present archiving activities commenced, and what an experience that has been.

Another cupboard and storage rack has been bought, along with some more archiving boxes and the like. Finally the fully refurbished doors of the Faulder Watson hall are in place. The colour? When I was younger and "doing" things, there was only one Heritage Red. Today twenty different shades. Yes folks, I got it wrong. Lindsay Dale asked his daughter to design an advertising banner for us, which she did. It is magnificent. It is on a fold up stand about 6ft high (2metres),

2ft 6" wide (750mm). I like the old measure of feet & inches. Lindsay also paid for it and donated it to the Pioneers. Many thanks Lindsay, daughter and wife Fay. I am sure that there are many wives in the background guiding, steering and making sure things get done, but get overlooked. To Fay and other background wives/partners Thank you, Thank you, Thank you.

To you who are feeling poorly, our wish for you this year, is that your medical problems improve.

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Andy Graham is not travelling too well at the moment and Melva has her hands full, one might say. Otherwise on the health front all seems quiet.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria (the parent body of historical societies) has issued an S.O.S. re Trove. **Trove is under Threat from Closure.** This is a fantastic tool to use for anyone interested in the past. We have been asked to help save and improve Trove and to enlist our members (you) help as well. We will do all of the above. The Old Telegraph will be buzzing again, when we start to use the N.B.N. as we fire off emails to politicians Local and Federal. I have been flicking through a book that recently came to light, THE GREAT MAJORITY. Obituaries of the Forest Creek Pioneers, from The Mount Alexander Mail 1855 – 1885. Edited by Pauline Myers. This was done before computers in everyday life was even thought of. What a job sourcing every copy and going through the death notices. There was no Trove back then. So yes folks we will put our shoulders to the wheel. By the way it's a good read and there are a few copies in the office. Onto a different subject, Australian Heritage Festival 18<sup>th</sup> April - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Victoria Program. "What?" This is Australia's largest annual community driven heritage festival in Victoria. The Festival is comprised of events across the state organised by National Trust properties, member branches, local historical societies, museums, local councils etc. The theme this year, "Shared Stories."

The exhibition's success must have gone to our Presidents head, when I showed him the brochure asking for his thoughts, he waved it away saying "of course, we will open the Telegraph Station." Well, I got to thinking "Shared Stories", there is our book Recollections of the Castlemaine Pioneers, a lot of "shared stories" there. Then there is our extensive collection of taped speakers. My final thought is, about some of the telegrams that came into, and left, the Telegraph Station. Someone is needed to form a committee and get something started pronto.

A nice email came in the other night from one of our far flung members now living in Launching Place, whose father, of a well known Castlemaine family will celebrate his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday this month. He, and a large family group, are having a back to Castlemaine visit. They have booked time to visit our Telegraph Station. The family has a long connection with our Association, one member holding the position of President many years ago. I think that this is a very nice thing to do, revisit places and people that were special and bring back happy memories.

The January Meeting. To new members the January meeting is always held at another historical venue other than our own. This January we had B.Y.O. picnic tea in the Maldon gardens, followed by a visit and tour of the Maldon Museum.

Barbara and I arrived a little early at the gardens I was a little apprehensive I had not been poncing about on centre stage since mid November, had I been forgotten and nobody had read their newsletter? Silly me. The night dare I say, was to my mind a gentle and refined night. Good friends enjoying each others company, sharing a picnic tea in nice surroundings. Before the going into the museum, the secretary made presentations of nice wooden boxes with our badge set in the lid. It was in recognition of their sterling service to the organisation over the years, to Keith and Joy White, John and Margret Conn, Gary and Bev Hood. President Derick made us most welcome. He outlined the building's chequered history, and told us how the historical society became a museum. We were seated on nice chairs facing a big screen showing very professional rolling slide show. Derick's talk was very interesting outlining the difference between a historical society and a museum. We then browsed, looking and marvelling at the collection and display. When it was obvious that some people would have stayed all night, the secretary called "time gentleman to go" it was time to go. A very nice night was enjoyed by all, leaving us all with nice memories.

Speaking of nice and happy memories, what a treasure they are. Enjoyable in the making. Even more so when relived and shared. So folks don't be shy. Come on the Queenscliff Excursion and make lots of happy memories. That folks is my lot for this month, Ed & the hard working secretary. P.S. After a good meal it is nice enjoy a good Port & Cigar or, a nice After Dinner Mint.

A nice after dinner mint moment for me after reading last weeks Castlemaine's Mail, was reading that one of our members George Milford was made Harcourts 2023 Citizen of the Year. Fantastic.

The 100 and 50 years ago will be missing for a while. I have finished 2 old minute books and in the recent moving about of our stuff, the Collection of Significant Importance project and my consistent bungling incompetence, I have some searching to do. But readers all is not lost, I have discovered some old Secretary's Annual Reports that make for interesting reading about "The Olden Days". Ed.

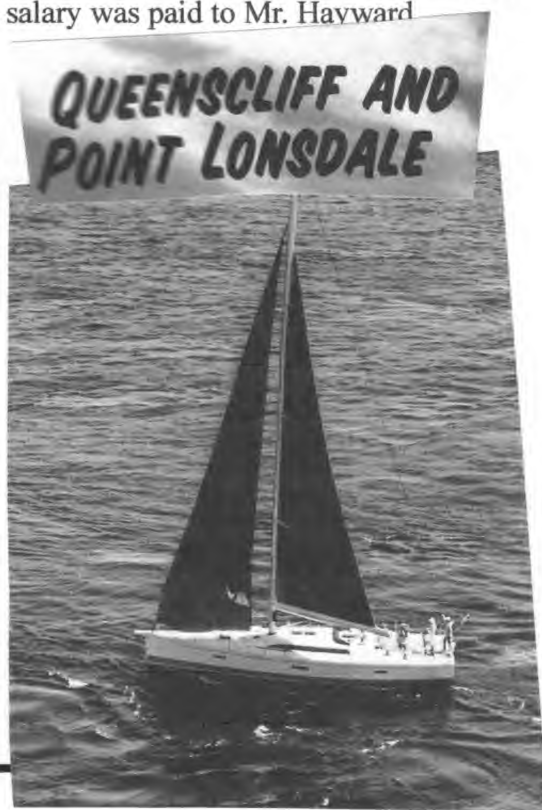
**High Lights from Secretary G.C. Rilen 1965.**  
 Mr President and Gentlemen, I hereby submit a brief report for the past 12 months. At the beginning of the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June, we had a bank balance of £108-13-10d. At the August meeting it was decided to convert to the Commonwealth Bank. At the September meeting the secretary was instructed to circularise all unfinancial members with the view of increasing the membership. I feel that the increase of 23 financial members was partly due to this move. A working bee was held at the Barkers Creek Cairn

on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, 8 members turned up. Despite the presence of a swarm of bees an excellent job of cleaning up was achieved. At the April meeting a sketch by Cuthbert Clark of the Moystyn St fire of 1860 was presented to the Association from the estate of the late L.C. Cowling. It is now on display in the Committee Room. On the subject of donated paintings, this notation from the late 1940's popped up : *The secretary reported that he had received on behalf of the Association from Miss Muirhead, who is leaving the district, a painting. The painting is by the late Conrad Frank, of a scene of the Lodden River between Vaughn and Glenluce.* I wonder where that painting is now? I haven't come across it in our collection yet. Can anyone help? Ed. For those of you who avidly follow the financial side of the organisation, the treasurer presented his financial statement with a balance in the bank of £52-0-11d. £3-2-6d five weeks salary was paid to Mr. Hayward

If you are going please let me know A.S.P. 54723186. Leave message.



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



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

*Next Monthly Meeting:*  
 Thursday February 16<sup>th</sup> 2023 at 7-30pm

**Guest Speaker**  
**Geoff Hocking** well known local author  
 talking about his book  
**Sandhurst to Bendigo.**  
**Friends and family welcome.**