



# 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: Graeme Barry 5472 3768 • Secretary: Wilson Bunton 5472 3186 •

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

## Newsletter – April 2018

Castlemaine, Good Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2018.  
Time 2045 hundred hours. Have just finished watching Gardening Australia, munching on a nice well buttered hot, hot cross bun. Just heard the sound of a steam train whistle. On opening the curtain, there it was; the train, that hard working (and well paid) Castlemaine-Maldon steam train. J549 steaming past the window the glow from the fire box, every carriage full of light packed with passengers, a magnificent sight. My railway correspondent informs me that it was a Wine & Cheese special. How about we hire the train for our Show & Tell night next December? Enough of this trivia, the Newsletter awaits. Lots to say and I have no idea where I am going, or how many pages. The weather has been just sooo, good recently, a little dry but nicely autumn. Autumn, that time in nature's cycle, the time when things start to slow down. Time to prepare for a period of peaceful slumber and hibernation. Nature always gets it right, I like the idea of "peaceful slumber". But folks; there is no such thing for the wicked. This year is looking very full, as is next. Starting with our Annual General Meeting in July. Graeme our highly esteemed President thinks that the Presidents honour board needs to be refreshed, In our 138 years there have been 126 Presidents with the late Bill Webb the longest serving, 1985 -1989 that is, up to now. President Graeme has 14, and he feels it would be nice to have another name on the board. Your committee feels that the time is ripe to make some changes. **Don't panic**, I said some! Old age sickness and death has taken its toll over the past few years. The average age of the present committee is 112 years 6 months with 2 members not travelling well. What would be nice to see this year, is that we get 3 or 4 new and **Younger** members join the committee, that way there would be a pool of old knowledge of the organisation (there is a lot to know, when an organisation is 138 yrs old), mixed with youth, fresh ideas and the knowledge to steer this Grand old Organisation into the present century. I know that this is not going to happen *just like that*, it is going to take a lot of effort on my part. You

younger ones will need to be persuaded, so be prepared for some "persuasion". A discussion paper will appear with next months newsletter outlining things, "Politician speak for pulling the wool over your eyes". One week later, 8<sup>th</sup> April. Been to the swap meet quite, a hot dusty day, came home with a bargain. The March meeting was almost formal, we actually followed the agenda and finished early. Which was just as well because Peter Wilson had been asked to talk to us about "All things Apples, and old Harcourt" However earlier that morning a newish member (18 months or so), who had never attended a meeting because it clashed with another, contacted me to say that tonight she was free and had a good family story to tell. Well you don't turn down an offer like that, especially when you have heard the bare bones that were so interesting. To do justice to both speakers, I will report on Peter and Harcourt now, covering Heather's next month. Harcourt, popular belief has it, that it was named after the well known English statesman Sir William Harcourt. It became famous for its apples, pears and Granite. 1836 saw Major Mitchell pass through the area. In the early 1850's William Barker settled in the area, building a substantial stone residence. First plantings were recorded in 1859, and the first fruit was exported to England in 1885/6. The early plantings saw the trees planted 100 trees an acre and pruned into a vase like shape. Pruning was hard and tedious, frost was a problem, 4 gallon drums of oil/fuel was burnt to raise the temperature. It wasn't until the early 1960's that the first wind machined was installed. Cultivation was horse drawn, scarifier, mouldboard plough, etc. Then the rotary hoe. In the late 1960's cultivation ceased in favour of grass slashing. Harvesting was very labour intensive and hard. The industry flourished supporting many growers, large and small, plus private cool stores, via the Harcourt Co-op of Fruit Growers, and the Harcourt Fruit Supply. Both acted as packing agents and export agents, Harcourt boomed. In the 1960's there were approximately 118 growers. Today a few backyarder's

6 commercial growers, 2 large corporate growers. (most of us remember when it was wall to wall apple stalls from Eliphinstone to Harcourt and beyond). Today trees are smaller, grown closer together, are trained on wires or trellis producing much more fruit. Irrigation is by drippers, and they have an automatic heating system that keeps them cosy when its cold and frosty. The Harcourt Co-operative Cool Store was built around 1917, burnt down 1951, re-built and ironically burnt down again 50 years later 2001, rebuilt once again and is still operating today. There is so much more I could write of this story, but space dictates that I stop now. **NOW AN URGENT REMINDER!** Your secretary in his usual chaotic way organised a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon in the hall for the 15<sup>th</sup> April, the week before our next meeting, instead of the Sunday after. Time 2pm - 4pm, showing an old film from our archives. Cost \$5 children free (with an adult)

Please come, help serve tea/coffee swell numbers. and talk to the public raising our profile. Two interesting people dropped in this week, both with a story to tell. The first was a newcomer to town. One of her Great, Great etc was in charge of the Pigeon Post connecting King Island to the Mainland, before the island was connected by telegraph. A good speaker coming up soon. Another story from a local this time, again concerning a Great Great etc is about a very early arrival to Tasmania 1830's. Captured by pirates, released because there was no money on their ship Watched an English Man of War overhaul the Pirate Ship and sink it with gunfire. Then when they were off the coast of Brazil their boat caught fire, burning to the water line, They were rescued and sent on to Tassie. Another good night pending Congratulations to Liz Sharplin on gaining her Australian Citizenship and becoming an Aussie. Aussie, Aussie, Aussie Oy, Oy,Oy



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*Next Monthly Meeting:*  
Thursday April 19th 2018 at 7-30pm  
At the Old Telegraph Station 208 Barker St. Castlemaine.

**Guest Speaker**  
**Dawn Angliss with some stories of Newstead  
and Dalesford, one concerning a little girl will  
bring tears to your eyes**  
**Family, friends and anybody else welcome.**

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