



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 54723285. • Secretary: Wilson Bunton 5472 3186 •

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

W: www.castlemaine pioneers.org

E: castlemaine pioneers@gmail.com

Newsletter – March 2023. The next meeting celebrates our 143rd Birthday.

Castlemaine 5th. The Old Telegraph Station Barker St. Weather cool morning with the arrival of autumn we say goodbye to the warmth of summer and welcome crisp air and the beautiful colours of the season. Earlier this morning the first passenger train for March passed by my window on its way down to Castlemaine, after a months break for track maintenance. The old faithful Y class diesel out in front. It nice to see the old rhythm of life return. Speaking of rhythm Wednesday 15th Feb saw 30 odd Pioneers and friends slip silently away from the curb outside the Market in a modern motor coach bound for Queenscliff. It was the day of our Annual Excursion. 138 years ago the site and sound would have been totally different. Many excursions over the years left from the railway station. The snorting, huffing & puffing of the steam engine, mingled with the sound of farmers, foundry & woollen mill workers, their wives and children all excitedly chattering as they boarded the train for a long day at the seaside by train and paddle steamer. First stop Ballan. Coach Captain Greg took us to nice park just through the town, where he quickly and expertly set up morning tea Home muffins etc made by his wife. Then it was on to Geelong through I kid you not, a veritable multitude of wind farms. Wind farms as far as the eye could see on both sides of the road. Stopping at the Geelong Botanical Gardens to stretch our legs, it was then time for the last leg, Queenscliff. There are two piers at Queenscliff and your secretary running true to form, guided the coach to the wrong one and disembarked everyone. Back onto the bus, found the right pier complete with lunch cafe and all was well. Lunch, what a lunch. Not one complaint service was exemplary, staff very pleasant, the food and drink beyond reproach. One of our Geelong members Victor Bibby joined us for lunch and we all said that "Nelly's At the Pier was a great place to eat". Now the story of the two piers. The first one we went too is the more recent, built when the vehicle ferry began operating. The second is the original pier, the one where many Castlemaine

citizens in bygone years disembarked from one of those bay paddle steamers walking along it to enjoy the delights of Queenscliff. It was also the pier with the Art Show. Some 40 odd pictures had been enlarged to poster size, displayed along the rail on both sides of the pier, with solar lighting for night time viewing. An unusual and delightful exhibition in my view. Back on the coach for a tour of the historic and new parts of Queenscliff. Point Lonsdale our next destination. We did not stop here. The small main st, nicely stocked with cafe's bars and tourist shops, still looks much as it always has. Greg then gave us a tour of the new Queenscliff. Modern development gone mad in my opinion. Modern houses cheek by jowl, narrow streets and man made canals. Back to Castlemaine, arriving at 5-30pm. The coach driver made an interesting comment to me as I got off, "a very good trip that everyone enjoyed. 99% of trips I do, the return journey is usually very quiet. Just the occasional snort and snore. This one, everyone stayed awake laughing and chattering till they got off. A sign of a good day". Now Folks, time to get serious. Our contribution to Heritage Month, is the opening of the Old Telegraph Station for six days Monday 24th April to Saturday 29th April 10am – 3pm inclusive. The theme I hear you ask? *How that small Morse code dot & dash all those years ago developed into today's Smart Phone.* Marli and Greg have offered to help with design and set up, and they would welcome help from others. We have 5 weeks from the march meeting to get the show on the road. It is being advertised widely, our own web site, web sites belonging to The Royal Historical Society of Victoria, The Mechanics Institute, The AMaGA Victoria all of which we are members of. Also our own councils web site along with radio and the press. What is required from you good, faithful and hard working members is; 3 members to man the barricades on each of the six days we are open. "no problem I hear you reply?" Talk about it at the next meeting Don't forget the next meeting is our 143rd birthday whoopee!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



THEN



NOW

The earliest Melbournians delighted in taking trips around Port Phillip. From 1880 steamer companies launched a glamour excursion era aboard PS Ozone and PS Hygeia. Records show these vessel alone ferried 50,000 day-trippers each year. Queenscliff was a preferred resort destination offering beach strolls, public baths, bay vistas open reserves, and a charm far removed from bustling Melbourne. From the pier you could watch the comfortable and well appointed steamers plying the bay waters, floating party boats with their bands playing, young people dancing and promenade decks lined with sightseers. Or you could welcome the eager passengers disembarking at the pier. Tea Rooms and Guest Houses sprung up near the foreshore to accommodate the visitors. This tradition continues today with a thriving tourist trade attracted by fine dining, elegant bed & breakfasts and old fashioned hospitality.



How does one describe Geoff Hocking artist and author, our guest speaker at our February meeting? There was no snappy power point, laser pointer that wandered all over the wall, utter chaos as computer leads were incompatible, or flat batteries etc type of presentation. It was a gentle walk with an old friend as he told his story. His story, the writing of a book, of local history the early days of gold in Sandhurst, now known as Bendigo, touching on some of his families involvement. Most of us know Geoff not only as an author and artist, but as a "good bloke" too. He built a house in Odgers Rd some 30 odd years ago still living there with his family. A true blue Castlemanian you could say. The book he was talking about *Sandhurst Genesis to Federation*, took us on a long and interesting path of research into many historical areas. We looked at the time when the gold taken out of the ground around this area was so great, it really helped our fledgling state to become a mover and shaker as the country moved toward Federation. Along the way we journeyed down some local byways, (this happens when there are locals in the audience whose families go back to those early days). Our chairs have a tolerance level of about 35 minutes, then the hardness of the wood kicks in. Our meeting took 35 minutes, Geoff spoke for about 45 minutes and when he finished, not one person had wriggled, shuffled or left their seat. This testifies to just how interesting his talk was. I bought the book and I find it hard to put down. A great talk, thanks Geoff

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Saturday 25th February The Old Telegraph Station was alive and kicking. One of our member's father, (Castlemaine born & bred) was celebrating a major birthday. He had moved away from the Maine in his late teens many years ago, but always called Castlemaine home. For a birthday present the family had brought him to Castlemaine for the weekend so that he could travel down memory lane. I found it beautiful to watch sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters get so much pleasure, from this old mans pleasure as he relived the past, chatted to old friends becoming a young man again remembering the past. There were quite a few tears present when he told how he used to take our past President Graeme Barry to Sunday school and back home again. As the man was looking at one of our pictures on the wall, he said "*that man there, is my grandfather*" and told me a little about him. Suddenly a light bulb flashed and a lot of things fell into place historically, (more later). The old gentleman concerned has lived a very full and interesting life. This weekend I believe will be one of its highlights. What a lovely gift he was given by a loving family.

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The pioneers

While Castlemaine holds her Jubilee,
Midst mirth and lusty cheers,
I'll lilt a rhyme of a by-gone time,
A song of the Pioneers!

Fifty Short years or more have flown
Since their youthful days were passed
In mystic dreams of golden streams
-Of wealth too swift to last.

But they dug and toiled from morn till night
And knew no Socialist creed,
With honest-toil they tilled the soil
And earned their every need.

Then every man was a unit of strength
With a will to do and dare,
And woman's might like a jewel bright
Was a querdon rich and rare.

Tho'rough were the times, and luxuries scant,
They had health and hearts as light
As swallow's wing in early spring
When on her homeward flight.

Ah! True wore the hearts of the workers then,
And honesty
And honesty claimed her own,
While demagogue's "rot" or traitor's plot
Were seldom or ever known.

Though they dwelt in canvas tents and felt
The cool of the midnight breeze,
Their sleep was sound as the rocks around
And soft - as the rustling trees.

And the swish of the cradle by the creek
Was music sweet to the ear
As the lusty song of the digger strong
Would end with a ringing cheer.

Oh! Where are the mates I worked with then
And joined in their eager glee?
Many now sleep in Eternity's deep
And silent, conquering seal

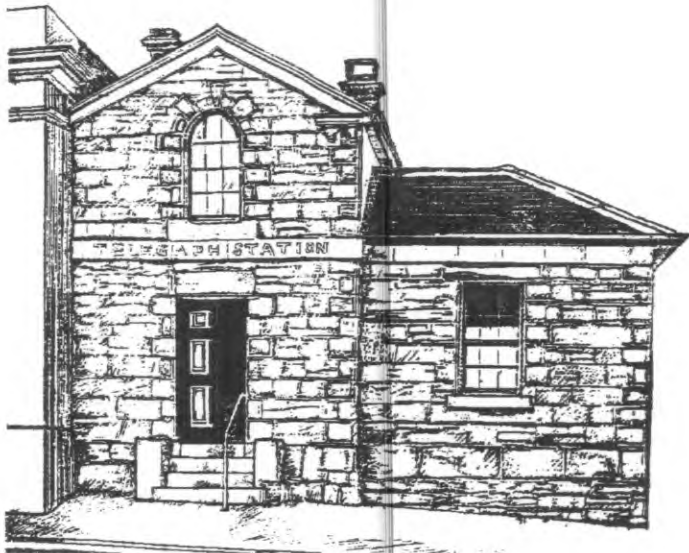
But rivers are spanned and forests cleared,
While around us every where
Are smiling plains where plenty reigns
For our sons and daughters fair!

This poem I believe
was written by one
of our Pioneers.
More next month Ed

Jam Rattray 1903

Excerpts Secretaries Annual Report 1966

Mr. President & Gentlemen, in presenting this report of the activities of this association during 1965-66, I do so with mixed feelings of gratitude to those loyal members who have assisted so willingly right through the year, & feelings of disappointment hat other members particularly Trustee's & former Presidents of the association. In September strip heaters were installed in the hall. In February Councillor Mr. J. Verlin Mayor of Castlemaine became a new member. He received a very cordial welcome from the President and members. At the March meeting a very comprehensive report was received from Mr. Verlin on the general condition of the hall and some suggested improvements. At the April meeting it was decided to increase the hire of the hall by \$3, commencing in May. Unfortunately this increase resulted in the loss of one of our best tenants of the last few years. *G.C. Rilen. Hon Sec*



March 13th 1947.

The meeting opened at 8pm with the President Mr. Hayward in the chair. A letter was received from the A.N.A. society asking that the lighting in the hall be improved. It was resolved to have the two main lights lowered by 2 feet. The bank balance showed a balance of £59-5-11d. It was decided that a visitors book be provided.

26th February 1891. M.A.M.

The streets of Castlemaine were, almost deserted yesterday on account of the closing the shops and banks, and through the great numbers that left by the trains in the morning for the "Pioneers" excursion. Those who did not go with the holiday makers other diversions that they preferred. The only exceptions to the closing of business were those of restaurants and hotels, with comparatively meagre patrons. The cabs were poorly patronised as was seen by the string of them waiting on the stand the greater part of the day, waiting to be hired. *We had our own holiday*

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*Next Monthly Meeting:
Thursday 16th March 2023 7-30 pm.*

*A Trip down Memory Lane
from our extensive collection of audio tapes
Friends & Family welcome.
At The Old Telegraph Station Barker St*

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

