



# 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](http://www.castlemaine pioneers.org) E: [castlemaine pioneers@gmail.com](mailto:castlemaine pioneers@gmail.com)

Newsletter – August 2023. One month to National Wattle Day. 140 days to Christmas.

The Old Telegraph Station Barker St Castlemaine 2<sup>nd</sup> August, a nice late winters day. The daffodils are out I could say in *droves* or *en masse*, but I prefer *host* from the poem, *'I wandered lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er vales and hills, when all at once I saw a crowd, a host of golden daffodils (Wordsworth 1770-1850)*. The word golden brings me to my favourite subject at this time of the year, The Golden Wattle. On a return trip to St Arnaud yesterday the bush was choc a block with the beautiful gold of the flowering wattle. The creeks are flowing well and dams overflowing. The grass as green as could be, with sheep and cattle as fat as butter. Those early settlers chose well. Our last meeting, which was our A.G.M. All positions were filled bar that of secretary (more later). The recommendation to increase the membership fee for the 24/25 year was passed unanimously. Vin Cappy and President Russell said they would check out a few venues for our Christmas breakup. Barbara Bunton offered to take the Annual February excursion in hand and the hard working secretary (unpaid) will look after the January meeting. Now, the Secretary, as said earlier, the position was unfilled; *I have held the secretarial reins for the past 15 years ably supported by a good team, the committee. enjoying every minute unfortunately old age has caught up with me, with all the ailments that come with it. I am a lame dog it is time to put me out to pasture, time for me to hand the reins over to a younger person and get some new blood and ideas.*

When Graeme Barry called for nominations and got no reply, he suggested that the position be left open until the August meeting with the present secretary still holding the reins, while an assistant is found. What is involved? The secretary right from the start has never been part of the committee. It was a paid position, when a secretary left an ad was run in the local papers for a replacement. The secretary looks after the clerical side, the Executive Committee runs the show. Now I am not leaving the Pioneers, just slowing down. I will still do the newsletter and

be around. So here is a chance to learn where the bodies are buried, where the treasure is hidden and open up a whole new world for yourself. How? By becoming an assistant secretary. Is anybody listening? Now on with the meeting. After the President and Treasurer had their time in the sun, Graeme welcomed the new committee and it was straight down to business. The new fees, Christmas breakup, January meeting and the Excursion had been dealt with earlier. Now it was time to talk about next years Bi-annual major exhibition, when, where and theme. When? The first half of 2024. Where? The Town Hall (secretary to check available dates and book). Theme? The Shires Sporting History. Involving some of the various sporting clubs in the shire. (President to get the ball rolling by forming a sub committee). Moving on, The Mostyn St Window. Russell has his Old Pubs on display and at the beginning of September Trevor and Keith will be hot to trot with a display built around some of the old gold mines in the shire. In mid October the theme will be, Famous Local People. December and January 2024, Monuments and Old Places of Interest. Anybody wishing to do a display for February and early March next year put you hand up now.

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*A letter of thanks to present and past members. Now that the hand delivery and postage of the newsletters has stopped, and it is electronic delivery only, a big thankyou to all who provided their email address. To those of you who have not paid your subs this year, the organisation is sad. We would like to put on record, that your past support has been very much appreciated and you have played a very important part in keeping this very old Castlemaine organisation (144 next year) going. The Pioneers over the years has played a very important part in building the social and commercial fabric of our town and shire. If you have a query about you financial status, or whether I have your email ring me 0354723186. evenings is best.*

### From our Collection.

Recently we had a request from Tasmania from a man whose roots originated in Castlemaine.

The request centered around his grandfather and local cricket. Sport is enjoying a lot of coverage in the news these days, what with the Matildas, the Test at Manchester and the Netball so I went digging. The name I was searching for is Alan Lowe a master with the bat. The team he played for the Castlemaine United Cricket Club formed in 1854 or 1855, it is one of the oldest cricket clubs in country Victoria. Alan was a fine cricketer and a prodigious hitter of the ball. According to eye witnesses when he was playing on the Camp Reserve he was able to lob a straight drive over the cricket pavilion at one end, and hit the ball with such force that at the other end the ball would roll out the main gate. On the Western Reserve he could hit the ball into the quadrangle of the schoolyard, today it would land on the roof of the supermarket. This information comes out of a book written by local historian Ken McKimmie called Castlemaine United Cricket Club A Short History 1881 – 2006. Ken played for the club and was a good player when he was younger. Another good player for the club is our own Mr. Cricket, Graeme Barry who held the position of District Secretary for nearly 30 years. This is an anecdotal story told by Graeme and I believe it because I have heard from different sources.

At a match being played on the old Guildford Ground, (which I believe was near the cemetery), Alan hit the ball so hard it cleared the fence into the paddock beyond. At the end of the over the President of the Newstead Shire who was watching the match, went up to Alan and gave him a £10 note in recognition of such a good stroke. Our Tasmanian enquirer came to Castlemaine for a day, had a great time being shown around his ancestral home. My digging showed me that Castlemaine has a huge sporting history. There were two rowing clubs one at Chewton, the other here in the Maine. They rowed on the Expedition Pass reservoir when it was much bigger, before the granitic silt, silted up a large part of it.

### The Mount Alexander Mail.

Castlemaine. March 26<sup>th</sup> 1873.

The members of the rowing clubs intend should the weather be fine, to take advantage of the half – holiday and have a good pull round the reservoir in the new boats this afternoon. After this little exercise the crews will be picked and practice commenced

forthwith. A good many of the members are resident of Castlemaine, who take a lively interest in the exhilarating and health giving exercise, and it is expected that before the opening day the full number will have subscribed their names on the roll of members; and paid their subscriptions

### Easter April 11<sup>th</sup> 1873.

The holiday season of Easter was, owing to the magnificent weather which prevailed on Friday and Saturday, thoroughly engaged by the pleasure seeking portion of the community, who dispersed in various directions, according to inclination, to gratify their whims, and employ their few leisure hours. Picnics, rambles through the bush, drives to distant localities in small social parties, and attractions of the boat races on the reservoir formed the staple sources of pastime in this locality, while the various trains bore many away to the metropolis and other localities, at the same time bringing many to enjoy the season with their friends here. At the Expedition Pass reservoir the Castlemaine and Chewton Rowing Club held their opening fete, and although the occasion was not what is termed a public one, in obedience to the request of the department, still the number of was very large. The novelty of boat racing, to say nothing of the pleasure of a sail, was no doubt a great attraction, and conduced to the large attendance. The members were dressed in full regalia, and each boat bore the colours and insignia of the club, and, with a view to please all, the program was so arranged that each might have a sail around the lake. Shortly after one o'clock, the first race came off, the boats were manned as follows:- Water Witch; No1, oar H.Brookes, No2.W. Coy, No3. J. M' Kinnon, No4. J. Hughes T. Prior, coxswain.-Lady of the Lake. No1 oar J Dolphin No2, R. Mitchell No3.T ODonohough No4, C Weatherly; J Starcken, coxswain. The race was well contested, and resulted in a victory for The Lady of the Lake. The next race did not take place till 3 o'clock, the boats being kept fully employed in conveying, first the ladies, then the children, round the reservoir, two of the members being off each time to row; in fact it was very discreetly resolved not to allow strangers to interfere with the boats in any way, for fear of accidents. In the second race the two crews changed boats, but victory again lay with Lady of the Lake. Altogether a most enjoyable day.

The picture below taken inside the Theatre Royal from the screen, looking at the audience in both the stalls and the dress circle circa 1920, was donated to us by one of our members John Holland just this week. It was hanging in the theatre when John's dad Vin bought it in 1935. Some of you will remember Vin and his wife Pearl who ran the theatre through the golden years of film and your youth. Vin a Shepparton boy off the farm started work at S.P.C. (the Shepparton Preserving Company) as a trainee accountant. After becoming an accountant and with a desire to make something of himself he continued working at S.P.C. by day working at night at the local picture theatre. Doing anything from selling tickets, lollies, ice cream etc or helping in the projection room> He was introduced to all sides of the picture theatre industry. His accountancy training told him that this was a good business to be in. Hearing that the Maryborough picture theatre was for sale, he caught a train to Melbourne, another to Bendigo, getting off at Castlemaine. With a couple of hours to wait before the Maryborough train left Vin took a stroll around Castlemaine. He liked what he saw. The foundry was going gang busters as was the woollen mill and the Bacon Factory. The streets were well laid out, wide and clean, (when we moved here in 1971 every morning at half past seven, two street cleaners started work at the corner of Barker & Campbell St. By 9am the town sparkled like a new pin.



unfortunately that can't be said today 2023). After looking at Maryborough, the town and theatre, he decided they were not for him. He thought that Castlemaine would be a nice place to live and have a picture theatre. Vin checked out the Theatre Royal (which required a lot of money to bring it up to scratch), got a silent partner, and bought it. There is a lot more to this story. History, love, the giddy heights of success, sadness and the perfect storm of television. I will try and get John, who is not well and living in care to write the full story. This story is well worth recording. Now back to our major exhibition in the town hall next April The Sporting History of the Shire. One of our members is a direct descendant of one of the major players in the formation of the Castlemaine Football Club in 1859, he indirectly put me onto this while digging around I found this; *The corner of Lyttleton & Hargaves St, the Castlemaine Football Club was formed here on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 1859, making it the 2<sup>nd</sup> oldest football club in Australia after Melbourne, when this building was known as The Supreme Court Hotel.* Now I know that most of Castlemains Footy fans know this, but I wonder how far this is known outside of Castlemaine? This exhibition will be a cracker.

Now onto the Sickies. Andy Graham is not travelling to well, Audrey Richardson is recovering from her fall. Clive Sharplin has had a bit of set back, Margret Conn & George Showell are as well as can be expected. Hang in there folks, you are not forgotten.

Finally, thank you to all of the hand deliverers, bike riders, and drivers who worked so hard over the years delivering the newsletter each month John & Browyn, Graeme & Lois, Russell & Jocie and Barbara.

## Not the usual 100 & 50 years ago

Pioneers Association Met in Building hired for a Shilling a Year: by A. Noel. Hudson.

A most comprehensive collection in the State, of records and pictures of Victoria in the early gold mining days are held at Faulder Watson hall, Castlemaine. Pictures of all sorts, many unduplicated elsewhere, are hung on the walls of the hall, and people from all over the Commonwealth have travelled to Castlemaine expressly to view the collection. First President of the Pioneers & Old Residents Association which collects the records & pictures was Mr. R. Mitchell in 1880, who was at that time the Mayor of Castlemaine. Prior to Mr. W. G. Thompson the present secretary being elected to that office in 1934, most of the collection was stored in a room upstairs, only a few pictures being on the walls. Mr. E. Taylor whom Mr. Thompson proceeded, was largely responsible for the collection. In the early days the association met in the old Town Hall, and in 1891 obtained the use of what was then the old telegraph office in Barker St, the present site of the Faulder Watson hall, at the rental of 1/- per annum. The Faulder Watson hall was built on to the office in 1894 when the association secured an Absolute "Grant" from the Government for the property and land, as long as they were in existence.

Among the most prized of the large collection is an old oil painting showing a panoramic view of the town in 1858. Three pencil sketches of Castlemaine in 1853 are also highly valued, as are other views of the town in 1857, 1860, and 1876. Another prized possession is an original agreement between J. Taylor, a land holder and the Mopoke Diggers which allowed 300 of the diggers into the land at Mopoke Gully, which is near Guildford, at a price of £10 per head, on condition that the land be levelled and the top soil replaced. This was on October 17<sup>th</sup> 1865. Altogether there are about 500 records and pictures in the collection and a few more have been recently added, a photo of employees at the Harwood Foundry Castlemaine, Greenhill Street about 1883, a picture of the Garfield Wheel about 1885, and a wood cut of Castlemaine in about 1859.

*This article I found tucked away in a mixed box of papers while fossicking around in one of our cupboards. It appears to have been cut out of an old newspaper, I think around the late 1930's early 40's. I have seen a newspaper article that talks of an exhibition the Pioneers held in Bendigo around this time. Ed.*



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

*Next Monthly Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> August 2-30pm*

*Guest Speaker Mr. Rob Nash  
Subject, an Australian designed and built  
early guided missile the Jindavick.*

*Friends and Family welcome*