

Historical Happenings

Special items in our newsletter:

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Casterton Community Museum

FYI

Government gazettes for
Victoria from (1836 to
1997) are available online at
the State Library.

<http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au>

FYI

For those with New Zealand
connections

New Zealand - Auckland
War Memorial Museum
Cenotaph Database

See the following websites:
<http://muse.aucklandmuseum.com/databases/Cenotaph/CompleteNames.aspx?cmd=sea>

Next Meeting of the
Casterton Historical Society
will be the AGM in August.
To be held at the Glenelg
Inn at 2pm, on August 19th.



Some of the film goes to the Merino Hotel's Historic Cinema on the 20th May 2009 for the Casterton and District Historical Society fundraiser. An historic occasion as this was the first fundraiser and public showing of a film for the recently refurbished cinema since it was re-opened last month.

Cinema Pure Merino Fandango

CATTLE STORIES AND BUSH YARNS

An historic event took place at our Merino Hotel's Cinema on Wednesday 20th May, when a dinner and film night was held by the Casterton and District Historical Society as a fundraiser, with the showing of "Cattle Stories and Bush Yarns – A short history of the livestock industry of the Glenelg Shire" produced by Promoting Heywood & District Committee Inc. History Group.

Prior to the film being shown, the Casterton Theatre Newsreel 1936 was shown and thrilled the audience and primed them for the feature film. (This DVD was the result of a reformatting project to aid the preservation of the original 16mm film which is in the Casterton Community

Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project

Held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday from 10 am to 12 noon.

Currently we are three quarter the way thru the headstone inscriptions and mapping the grave sites.

Mapping is currently suspended until September and the return of more conducive weather.

Last Saturday's volunteers had some sunshine - but a bitingly cold wind.



June 24th: 3pm at the Glenelg Inn

Afternoon tea with the Casterton New Cemetery Trust
For those volunteers who have been involved with the mapping project.

Please confirm your attendance with Peter Gorman.

Another enthusiastic young volunteer, Abby, oversees the work of Jan, David, Sandra and Ros last Saturday.



Museum and is part of the ongoing preservation projects being done by the Historical Society.)

In attendance was Executive producer of the film Fred Wilson who provided the film goers with a brief overview of the film and how it had been funded by a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria. With interviews of many of the local identities from the livestock industry from the Shire, the film was thoroughly enjoyed by over 50 attendees.

Ian Whalley, publican of the Merino Hotel, gave a brief speech about the history of the cinema and how many years ago, the person who ran the former drive-in up the road at Sandford moved his equipment to the Merino Hotel, where he covered in the courtyard out the back, and turned it into a cinema. No-one seems to know why the cinema stopped operating, but now Ian is determined to get it happening again. It was the cinema which attracted him to the hotel and eventually led him to buy it. Local community groups are encouraged to plan fundraising activities and can have access to the cinema for free of charge.

The cinema seats have come from the old Koroit theatre and fit perfectly into the cinema. When he came to choosing a name, Ian decided to borrow the title of a comic opera by Baz Luhrmann so aptly named the Cinema Pure Merino Fandango.

President of the Casterton and District Historical Society, Jan Lier, was ecstatic at the number of attendees to the historic occasion with 42 attending the dinner and 52 attending the film. This was a fantastic turn up to support the first organized showing of a film at the Historic Merino Cinema.

Another film produced by the Promoting Heywood & District History group will be organized later in the year featuring their DVD on the timber industry.

No doubt another packed house will enjoy the wonders of the silver screen!

For historical purposes the following list of names of those who attended the night are listed below:-

Glennis Haylock
Marj Quigley
Robert Scott and Vanessa Smith
Ruth and Noel Richardson
Kath and Bob Astbury
Marj Owens
Jim Kent
Judy Black
Robbie and Jean Green
Sandra White
Agnes Allen
Dawn Black
Marj Kerr
Helen and John Kirby
Julie Harris
Ray Harris
Joan and Ron Waters
Penny Fontaine & Terry Tranto
Dawn Richards
Pam Moore
Danny Telley
John Telley
David Green
Joan Hamill
Roly Cooper
Alf Lane
Jan Lier
Rick Lane
John and Joan Craig
Murray and Lorraine Davis
Fred Wilson
David Coventry
Hugh Delahunty
Joan Irving
David Luck
Sandra Parry
Veronica Taylor
Mary Davis
Sue Fleer
Beth Dwyer
Austin Blair
Cr. John Northcott
Peter Leake

Casterton Community Museum

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If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, please contact Jan Lier for further information: Ph. 0432 774314 or jlir3@bigpond.com or contact Ros on roscov@iprimus.com.au or telephone 5581 2875

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:
[www.ballaratgenealogy.org/
casterton/historicalsociety](http://www.ballaratgenealogy.org/casterton/historicalsociety)

The Life of Thomas Ernest McEvoy

by John Cleary and Jane Sullivan

Thomas Ernest McEvoy was born in Dunlavin, County Wicklow, Ireland, circa 1833. He was the son of David McEvoy and Mary Hayden. At the age of 20 he was recommended for the Royal Irish Constabulary by a local landowner by the name of Edward Pennefather, Esq. His appointment commenced on 1st December 1853.

On 25th March 1854 he was assigned to County Antrim. Whilst he was in County Antrim he met and married Charlotte Ennis. They were married on 5th June 1856. In County Antrim an advertisement from Australia was circulated calling for volunteers to join the police force. Men had to be under 35, single or married, and have no more than two children.

The pay offered was: Privates, 5 shillings, Sergeants, 8 shillings, and Inspectors, 12 shillings per day. This notice was taken from The Argus newspaper, Thursday, 7th December, 1854. This obviously influenced his decision to migrate to Australia. He resigned from the Royal Irish Constabulary on 9th April 1857. This was a huge decision to make, to leave loved ones and travel to an unknown land.

Thomas and Charlotte left Liverpool shortly after on board the "Sir William Eyre" on 20th April 1857. The ship arrived in Melbourne on 21st July. Ships were often overloaded with people and food. Unhygienic conditions were prevalent resulting in many diseases causing death to many, with small children very vulnerable.

It was in these conditions that their first child was born on 31st May 1857. The little girl was called Margaret and was registered in Collingwood, Melbourne, on 22nd August 1857. Thomas joined the Victorian Police Force on 10th August and the family moved shortly after to Portland where Thomas became a Mounted Constable.

Sadly, Margaret died on 5th March 1858. A second girl was born at Portland on 21st July 1858. She was called Mary Anne and reaching adulthood married Andrew Gilmore, brother-in-law to Dame Mary Gilmore. Mary Anne died at 61 years and is buried in the Casterton New Cemetery. Thomas McEvoy then moved to Digby as a Senior Constable.

A third girl called Ellen was born in Digby on 8th February 1861. Tragedy was to strike again as Ellen died on 12th October to be followed 14 days later by her mother, Charlotte. Charlotte McEvoy and the two infants are buried in unidentified graves in the Old Cemetery in Portland.

When Thomas was stationed at Digby, he used to patrol around Strathdownie. One day he called to see Billy McEachern and decided to enter the

shearing shed where work was in progress. One of the shearers looked up and said: "There's a bobby". With that one shearer dropped everything, jumped out of the shed and ran down to a big swamp nearby. Thomas decided the man must be wanted for something, so he got his horse and followed the man to the swamp. He lost sight of the man but fired several shots where he saw the reeds move. He watched for hours but did not see the man again. Later he found out the name of the runaway who was none other than the notorious bushranger, Frank Gardiner.

Thomas McEvoy was dismissed from the Victorian Police Force on 27th November 1863 due to some faulty bookwork, as was his informant Constable Kirwan. Little is known of Thomas after he left the Police Force though it is recorded in the book "Echoes of the Past" that he leased the Sandford Hotel in the years 1859-62 for 150 Pounds per year.

Thomas McEvoy married Elizabeth Hawkins in Sandford on 8th July 1865. Elizabeth was a daughter of John Hawkins and Frances Lamb, who was one year old when the family came over from Tasmania to Digby. Thomas and Elizabeth's marriage was to last 44 years, when Thomas passed away on 30th April 1909. Elizabeth died at 80 years of age on 13th July 1925. This marriage produced six girls and one boy.

Thomas McEvoy first paid rates in the parish of Carapook in 1868 for 64 acres. In Bahgallah he owned between 950 and 1,000 acres from 1868 until his death.

He was Shire Councillor from 1873 to 1879 and President in 1877. Prominent citizens and councillors were often privileged by the naming of a street after them. Thomas McEvoy's name is remembered now only by a street in Casterton called McEvoy Street, running off Sylvester Street to the Dunrobin Road.

In Bahgallah the family home site of many years is situated one kilometer south the Bahgallah Hall. It is marked now by two Cypress trees, opposite the former football ground. The only son, David, died in 1918. All girls married, the little empire slowly disintegrated.

Thomas McEvoy and his wife are in separate graves in the Casterton New Cemetery. Seven of their children lie within 20 metres of their parents and many of the grandchildren are also nearby. Our link with Thomas McEvoy is through his daughter, Alice (Daley) Heenan.

by John Cleary great-grandson and Jane Mary Sullivan, great-great-granddaughter.