

# Historical Happenings

Casterton Community Museum



## Special items in our newsletter:

Jeffrey Bros Cordial Factory  
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## Next Meeting August 19<sup>th</sup> AGM

of the Casterton Historical  
Society to be held at the  
Glenelg Inn at 2pm, on  
August 19<sup>th</sup>.

Guest Speaker is Councillor  
Bruce Cross.

**Nomination forms are  
attached / enclosed with  
this newsletter and  
nominations should be  
returned to the Secretary  
by 5pm, Friday 7th  
August.**

## A little bit of fizz gone flat

by local historian, Jim Kent

As you drive down McPherson St in Casterton, do you ever ponder about the history that lies behind a large old building numbered 36 on your right hand side? The front piece has a cladding of pressed metal for the wall, and up at the roof line is the name proudly proclaiming 'Jeffrey Bros Cordial Factory'.

These types of factories once were the part of townships all over Australia, but sadly they, like a lot of other enterprises, have been obliterated by multi-national companies.

Following a request from a member of the Jeffrey's family, I did some research relative to this once familiar name in Casterton.

Starting in 1795 in Denbigh-Shire, North Wales, in the United Kingdom, Robert Jeffrey's was born.

He later moved to Liverpool, England, where he married Ann Williams, and fathered a family of five girls and four boys. Of this family, two of the boys are of particular interest to our town of Casterton. Firstly was one Thomas J Jeffrey, who was born in Liverpool in 1829, and married there in 1850.

Secondly was his brother, Benjamin Jeffrey, who was born in Portland, Australia, in 1862, married in Hamilton in 1884, widowed in 1894, and married again in 1896. Thomas and his bride emigrated to Australia, landing in Portland in 1854. He later came to 'Muntham' to work for Edward Henty.

From 'Muntham' he came to the embryo

town of Casterton, where for a short period of time, was the local undertaker. He then established the cordial factory, which later became known as Jeffrey Bros.

On his arrival in Portland, Thomas could neither read nor write. He was to die in Casterton in 1903, and is buried in the Casterton Cemetery. He fathered nine children, among them sons named John and Benjamin.

The second son of Robert and Ann, called Benjamin, also joined Thomas in the cordial factory. One son of Benjamin's second marriage was called Alfred Tennyson, better known to his friends as 'Tinny'. Of special mention is a daughter called Kate, a long time and valued secretary of the Casterton Hospital.

I can only surmise that Thomas Jeffrey started the cordial factory in the 1860's.

I know he handed it over to his son, Benjamin, in 1876, and know that his brother John, who was a merchant in Henty Street, was a 'silent' partner in the factory. Then Benjamin, in 1903, handed the factory over to his sons, Claude and Alfred, better known as 'Tinny', and the factory still traded as Jeffrey Bros.

The famous trademark of JB was established by Claude and 'Tinny'. Prior to this JB trademark, there was a J and B Jeffrey, and a B with a J superimposed on it, also prior to the JB mark, was one BJ. 'Tinny' never married, and Claude only had one son called Graham, better known to us as 'Micky'.

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## Casterton New Cemetery Mapping Project



Held on the 2nd and 4th Saturday from 10 am to 12 noon (currently suspended until September and the return of more conducive weather). We are now about three quarters of the way through mapping the entire cemetery.



Visitor Information Centre

Casterton

Ownership of the factory, after the deaths of Claude and Alfred, passed to Claude's widow, and son 'Micky'. Micky then established another trademark, BIG J. He sold the factory in 1969 to Jack Phillips and John Johnstone, better known as 'Kiwi'.

In doing this research, I recorded 30 pages, which detail the lives of 389 descendants of Robert and Ann Jeffrey's, and covers the years from 1795 to 2005.

Various types of bottles were used in this business, and the trademarks that embossed them, and the meanings of these trademarks. As previously stated, Thomas Jeffrey's started making flavored aerated water in 1876, using bottling equipment imported from England.

He was to continue in this business until 1903, when he handed it over to his sons John and Benjamin. John became a merchant, who traded at his premises in Henty Street, Casterton, for 45 years.

The earliest trademark was stamped on bottles, known as the 'Hamilton Patent' (overseas), and the bottles were referred to as the 'Torpedo', because of their shape. The trademark was J & B Jeffrey's Casterton, representing John and Benjamin Jeffrey's.

Then, in time, further types of bottles were used, such as the 'Codd Patent', which used a glass marble which sealed the contents on an ebonite ring, and these carried the trademark J B, again representing John and Benjamin Jeffrey's.

During 1885 these two brothers dissolved their partnership, with Benjamin carrying on the aerated water business, his bottles carried his trademark of B J Jeffrey's Casterton. Another type of bottle had appeared on the market, and was known as the 'Lamont Patent', and used a glass plug, which sealed the contents on an ebonite ring – these bottles carried the B trademark.

Around 1929, Benjamin handed the cordial factory over to his two sons, Claude and Tennyson Jeffrey's, and again further trademarks adorned the bottles. It was not until Claude died in 1948, Tennyson (Tinny) had died in 1947, that the management of the factory came under the control of Claude's widow, Mrs M Jeffrey's.

In 1969 Messrs John (Kiwi) Johnson and Jack Phillips bought the factory from Mickey, and

continued to use this trademark, and so the cordial factory, after being in control of four generations of Jeffrey's, passed into other hands.

Some points of interest re the products of this factory are that legend has it, some recipes used were of French origin. It was widely known that the products of this factory were of a very high quality. They found favour in the leading hotels in Melbourne, namely Scots and Menzies, where they added flavour to the spirits dispensed over these ornate bars.

Our local historical society is fortunate enough to have in its collection some of these Jeffrey's Bros bottles which are keenly sought after by collectors.

An ex-Casterton collector, who now lives in Naracoorte, Brian Buckle, has an extensive collection of these beautifully embossed trademarked bottles once used by the remarkable Jeffrey's family.

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## THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND THE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Family history research equipment has now finally been moved to the VIC and there will be a grand opening to coincide with History Week coming up in October.

Meanwhile many records are available for researchers using the microfiche, microfilm as well as computerized records. We have set up a dedicated area on the front enclosed verandah which is a space just the right size for our needs.

Family researchers are asked to complete a form detailing their enquiries, for our records, and research can also be done for clients at a cost of \$10 per hour. The new access to historical records we hope should prove a remarkable success and provide much information not easily found before this initiative.

**Casterton Community Museum**



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**We're on the Web!**

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

## CASTERTON NEW CEMETERY HERITAGE VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE RECOGNITION

An afternoon tea was held by the Casterton New Cemetery Trust on Wednesday 24th June to thank the volunteers for their participation over the past 16 months in collaboration with Heritage Victoria and Conservation Volunteers Australia.

About 20 people attended and were welcomed and thanked by Mr Jeff Hortle, chair of the Casterton New Cemetery Trust. The volunteers were presented with certificates of appreciation and an afternoon tea followed. Those receiving certificates were Janet Kerr, Jan Lier, Ruth Richardson, Bob and Kath Astbury, Sandra White, David Coventry, Ros Coventry and Roly Cooper.

Roger Southern from Conservation Volunteers gave a powerpoint presentation and was joined by president Jan Lier, who has been largely responsible for the transfer of, and updating of maps to a computer database for future generations. Mr Southern reported on what has been discovered and collated to date to make the project sustainable into the future. He emphasized the importance of the cemetery as part of our cultural heritage and the number of interesting stories behind graves and the cemetery in general. Work at the cemetery will continue, as at least a quarter of the graves remain to be mapped.

Further steps to be taken include photographing of headstones, implementation of a new row and numbering system, development of a cemetery brochure and the identification of headstones of significance. A database will also become accessible from the internet.

Anyone wishing to assist with the continuing mapping project is welcome to contact Jan Lier.



Back Row:

Peter Gorman, Roger Southern, David Coventry, Sandra White, Bob Astbury, Jeff Hortle,

Front Row:

Ros Coventry, Joan Waters, Kath Astbury, Jan Lier, Janet Kerr  
Absent: Ruth Richardson and Roly Cooper