



Castlemaine Society Inc.
No. A01153160

CASSOC Bulletin

Winter, 2024



Welcome to the CASSOC 2024 Winter Bulletin.

Dear members, supporters and readers generally, since our Summer Bulletin, the pace for the CASSOC committee has been somewhat frenetic and the demands on our small committee have been such that we've had to forego our intended Autumn Bulletin, but we have a bumper Winter edition to make up for it!

We are delighted that our efforts, together with those of other community groups, have resulted in some amazing outcomes, informing and bringing our community together.

With our limited skills and resources, we do our best to keep our website up-to-date. We would be delighted if anyone with website skills may be prepared to help us on that front.

We hope you enjoy our bumper **Winter Bulletin!**

Local historian's book launch a resounding success!

In late February, at the Market Building, CASSOC hosted the launch of Dr Marjorie Theobald's book *'The Goldfields Re-imagined: militant miners, miscreants and poor Mary Anne'*.



Marjorie Theobald speaking to the gathering.
Right: CASSOC President, Bryon Cunningham

The book is the latest by Castlemaine's celebrated historian and author, describing the Goldrush era and the early European establishment of the township of Castlemaine.

It was fitting that, guest speaker, Robyn Annear, another well-known local historian and author, introduced Marjorie and her fascinating new book to a large and appreciative audience. She spoke of the value of Marjorie's research, especially the focus on women and other groups not readily found in the administrative records; with few exceptions, only 'miscreants' with a court record left a record for researchers to find. Robyn touched on the



Guest speaker, Robyn Annear

anecdotes describing amusing, pretentious and victimised characters so well portrayed in Marjorie's book.

Marjorie thanked the Market Building staff for allowing the event to take place "in such a beautiful space". She recalled that, while she was a student at the neighbouring high school (the building is now home to the IGA supermarket) there was a proposal to pull down the Market Building to be replaced by the local SEC headquarters, and was thankful that this had been unsuccessful.



The Market Building:: a beautiful setting for the book launch.

Marjorie also thanked CASSOC for organising the event. CASSOC President, Bryon Cunningham, then spoke of the value of the work of both Marjorie and Robyn. He briefly spoke to CASSOC's motto *Conserving the character of Castlemaine* and its aim "to provide constructive consultation with Council to ensure sympathetic planning as it relates to the heritage and street-scapes of the town".

Copies of Marjorie's book are available at the Market Building and Stoneman's Bookroom.

Castlemaine's Heritage Festival hits gold

The National Trust of Australia's biggest community-driven Heritage Festival took place over April and May and coincided this year with the 50th Anniversary of Victorian state government heritage legislation.

The 2024 theme was **Connections**; encouraging celebration of the rich and diverse stories of our nation, strengthening cultural and historical ties and recognising their crucial connections to where our communities are today.

On 27 April, through National Trust, Bendigo Branch, CASSOC together with Gold Camp Castlemaine, with assistance from Castlemaine Historical Society, showcased Castlemaine's historic Government Camp environs; once the pre-eminent Government administration precinct during the 1850s gold mining period for the entire fledgeling Colony of Victoria.



The former Powder Magazine

In recognition of our First People of this area, the Dja Dja Wurrung, the day commenced with a Smoking Ceremony conducted by Uncle Rick Nelson by the 'Survey Tree', near the junction of Barkers, Forest and Campbells Creeks.

Two tours were organised over the course of the day to give rare access to such houses as the Gold Commissioner Bull's residence, Sheriff Colles's house, Burke's house, the Powder Magazine and the Powder Magazine Keeper's Cottage and visits to

other original buildings from the time including the house of Ah Coy, the Chinese translator for the administration, the former military quarters and the former Court House (home of the Castlemaine Historical Society).



Lola Montez (aka Eliza Tree) and Owen Clarke in period costumes

At the Former Court House, distinguished guest speakers addressed a large community gathering about various aspects of Castlemaine's connection with history.

Dr Bob Marmion spoke about Commissioner Bull and translator Ah Coy, Prof Keir Reeves spoke to Ah Coy and the Chinese who represented a quarter of the miner population at one time. Peter Cox, President of National Trust Bendigo branch spoke to the importance and value of history and Stuart Duff of the Victoria Police Historical Society explained the significance of the Castlemaine government camp, as administration centre for all the goldfields across the fledgling colony of Victoria.

Stuart and Owen Clarke had also set up a fascinating historical display of police tent and paraphernalia of the late 19th century and were, themselves dressed in uniforms of that time. Also a surprise visit by 'Lola Montez' (aka Eliza Tree) added a sense of living history.

The enthusiastic support by the Castlemaine community and visitors to this first-time participation in the National Trust's Heritage Festival exceeded all our expectations.



Smoking ceremony conducted by Uncle Rick Nelson



Prof. Kier Reeves - Ah Coy and the Chinese community.

Thank you for your support!

We are indebted to and greatly appreciate the tireless help given by our members and supporters over the last very busy few months! In recognition of our unassuming helpers a relaxed **Thankyou Evening** was held on Saturday 1st June at the Northern Arts Hotel to express our thanks, unwind and just chat.



Find out more on our website at <https://castlemainesociety.org.au> for up-to-date information on the various projects we support, how to join up as a member or to make a donation (or both!).

'The Alchemy of Gold'



CASSOC is joining members of other local historical societies including Castlemaine Historical Society, the Chewton Domain Society and the Maldon Museum to host a 3-day event in May 2025.

The theme is the transformative effect of gold in the Mt Alexander Goldfields.

Expert lectures and fields trips are planned.

Stay posted for more information to follow



Planning update

• Heritage planning presentation

CASSOC is organizing an event in October at the Northern Arts to meet the shire's planning officers. They will present a talk about the opportunities and restrictions of buying in a heritage overlay or a house that is heritage listed. This is about learning about the processes and regulations. There will be a Q&A at the end. More to follow

• Planning applications update

PA069/2022 - 15 Bowden St:

CASSOC notes that a subdivision application at was refused at Council on heritage grounds. This is on the heritage overlay HO668 Camp Reserve & Environs.

PA045/2022 - 2 Camp Crescent:

CASSOC members and others have submitted objections to a planning application for a townhouse on heritage grounds and the same overlay as above.

Archaeological dig at Camp Reserve

The archaeological dig, being conducted at Camp Reserve by GML Heritage, is still open, although it was to have been reinstated by 26 July.

Council officers have advised that, following the first information session on 28 June, there is to be another similar information session held about further findings at the site.



A recent photo of the open archaeological dig site at Camp Reserve.

Support Gold Camp Castlemaine; buy a beautiful tote bag



Support Gold Camp Castlemaine and buy a beautiful *Government Camp* themed jute shopping bag for just \$25.

The proceeds will go towards Gold Camp Castlemaine's advocacy for Camp Reserve, Castlemaine's premier historic precinct.

If you would like to purchase a bag, please ring **Alice** on **0400 115 674**