

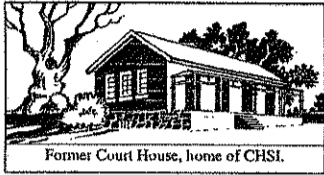
**CASTLEMAINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.**

The Castlemaine Historical Society was formed in 1965. The Society operated for many years from temporary premises in various locations.

In 1996 the Society was granted a lease to its present home in the historic Former Court House. This enables the members to more effectively carry out the aims of the Society; *to study, record and promote the historical heritage of Castlemaine and District.*

Meetings (with interesting guest speakers), exhibitions, a monthly newsletter, guided tours, the development, cataloguing and maintenance of an historic archive collection, indexing of records and the provision of a research service are the major means by which these aims are furthered.

**FAMILY & LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH:**



Anyone wishing to study aspects of Castlemaine's rich history, or research their family heritage can access the archives of the the Society in person, or by forwarding a research request by mail.

**Research in person:**

The Former Court House, 7 Goldsmith Crescent, is open to the public on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Ph: (03) 5470 6072

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS MADE WELCOME!**

Appointments for other times can be arranged by phoning (03) 5472 1425 or (03) 5474 3011

**Mail inquiries:**

Write to: **Castlemaine Historical Society Inc.**  
P.O. Box 655, Castlemaine, VIC. 3450  
Email: [chsi@castlemainehistoricalsociety.com](mailto:chsi@castlemainehistoricalsociety.com)  
(Please include a return postal address)

**Archives.** Society holdings include early directories, voters' lists, local newspaper index, various petitions and some records and indexes concerning land sales, gold escorts, mining leases, rate assessments, schools, churches and cemeteries.

A listing of holdings can be seen at Internet site:  
[www.castlemainehistoricalsociety.com](http://www.castlemainehistoricalsociety.com)

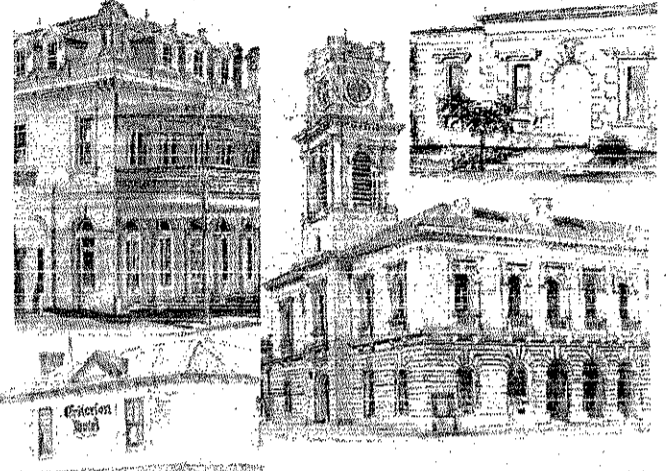
Text and map prepared by Castlemaine Historical Society Inc. (Reg. No:A9493B)  
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*Valleys of Gold: Castlemaine and Mount Alexander Goldfields Sketchbook*  
David Williams, 1992 (artist, author, publisher)  
37 Wildwood Avenue, Vermont South, 3133

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**HISTORIC WESTERN CAR TOUR**

**A DRIVE THROUGH SECTIONS OF HISTORIC CASTLEMAINE**

Welcome to Castlemaine - a gold mine of history



A vehicle round tour of about an hour in Western Castlemaine

Castlemaine Historical Society Inc.

As the Melbourne to Murray Railway reached closer and the contractors Cornish and Bruce opened their Victorian Railway Foundry in Castlemaine, the local newspaper presented this stirring description of the town, designed for readers in England.

"Castlemaine is the principal town of the Mount Alexander Goldfields. It is nine square miles in extent. The population consists of about 10,000 persons. It is the Market Town, however, of about 30,000.

The Town Council consists of seven members, elected by the ratepayers, three retiring by rotation annually. The last assessment of annual values of the property in the district was £90,000. The duties of the Council are strictly limited to municipal functions. The Crown Lands within the district are under the jurisdiction of an officer styled a Resident Warden.

There are six Banks in the town, besides a Savings Bank. We have an Episcopal, and a Catholic Church in the town and others in the neighbourhood, the denominational congregations being also represented by well built places of worship.

Manufactures of various kinds are carried on throughout the district. The weekly yield of gold averages over 5,000 ounces. There are two newspapers, no soldiers, and only a few police in the town.

The electoral district of Castlemaine is represented by three members, and the town is the place of nomination for the North-Western Province, which returns five members to the Legislative Council.

Castlemaine is at a point in the railway line where traffic will diverge and converge from various parts of the country. It will afford facilities for access to the interior from the seaboard that do not now exist, and will prevent that concentration of people in Melbourne, from which so many evils now arise, distributing them over the country, where there is work to be done.

The Victorian Railway Foundry in the inland town of Castlemaine, [is] an unanswerable argument against the sneers and depreciations of those who have not enterprise enough to enter on colonial life."

Mount Alexander Mail, 19th Oct. 1860

**CASTLEMAINE "THE GREAT CENTRE"**

European penetration and occupation dates back to the 1830s and 40s; the exploration of Mitchell and the pastoral days of Hepburn and others. Dr. W. Barker's Mt. Alexander Run and the neighbouring Strathloddon run, originally taken up by Donald Cameron, included the valleys of Barkers and Forest Creeks.

At Specimen Gully, Barker's huckeeper and shepherds discovered gold in 1851. This news triggered the gold rush and Castlemaine became the centre of the Mt. Alexander goldfields.

Estimates of the total amount of gold extracted from these fields vary, but it is known that in one six month period in 1852 Gold Escorts to Melbourne and Adelaide carried 587,584 ounces (16.6 tonnes) out of Mt. Alexander.

Originally the town was located around the Government Camp site (to the west of the railway line) under the control of Commissioner Wright. He named Castlemaine after his uncle's estate in Ireland.

15th. Feb. 1853 - First land sales of town allotments.  
1st. Nov. 1853 - Castlemaine gazetted as a township.  
23rd. Apr. 1855 - Proclaimed a Municipal District.  
15th. Oct. 1855 - Municipal Council proposed.  
22nd. Jan. 1856 - First Municipal Council elections.  
Jan. 1858 - Commissioners and military withdraw.  
11th. Sep. 1863 - Constituted a 'Borough'.  
30th. Jan. 1950 - Created a 'Town'.  
4th. Dec. 1965 - Declared a 'City'.  
22th. Jan. 1996 - Local Government Amalgamations: Castlemaine joins with Maldon, Newstead and most of Metcalfe to become the Mount Alexander Shire.

The advent of the railway in 1862, after much local political pressure, further added to the stability of the town.

**CASTLEMAINE'S BEGINNINGS**

This tour covers the western side of the town, with a certain concentration on aspects of Castlemaine's 1850s history, and the development of institutions and industries through the 1860s which formed the basis for the town's continued progress.

**HISTORIC WESTERN CAR TOUR**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. William Barker was a pioneer settler, whose pastoral run included part of the area that was later to become Castlemaine.

**Barker Street**

Commissioner Henry Porter Mostyn was in charge of the Camp at Fryers(town) and afterwards Inspector of Police in this district.

**Mostyn Street**

Lieutenant Thomas Lytleton was a member of the goldfields police. He later became Inspector of Police and was succeeded by Robert O'Hara Burke.

**Lytleton Street**

William Templeton was chief of the town survey staff.

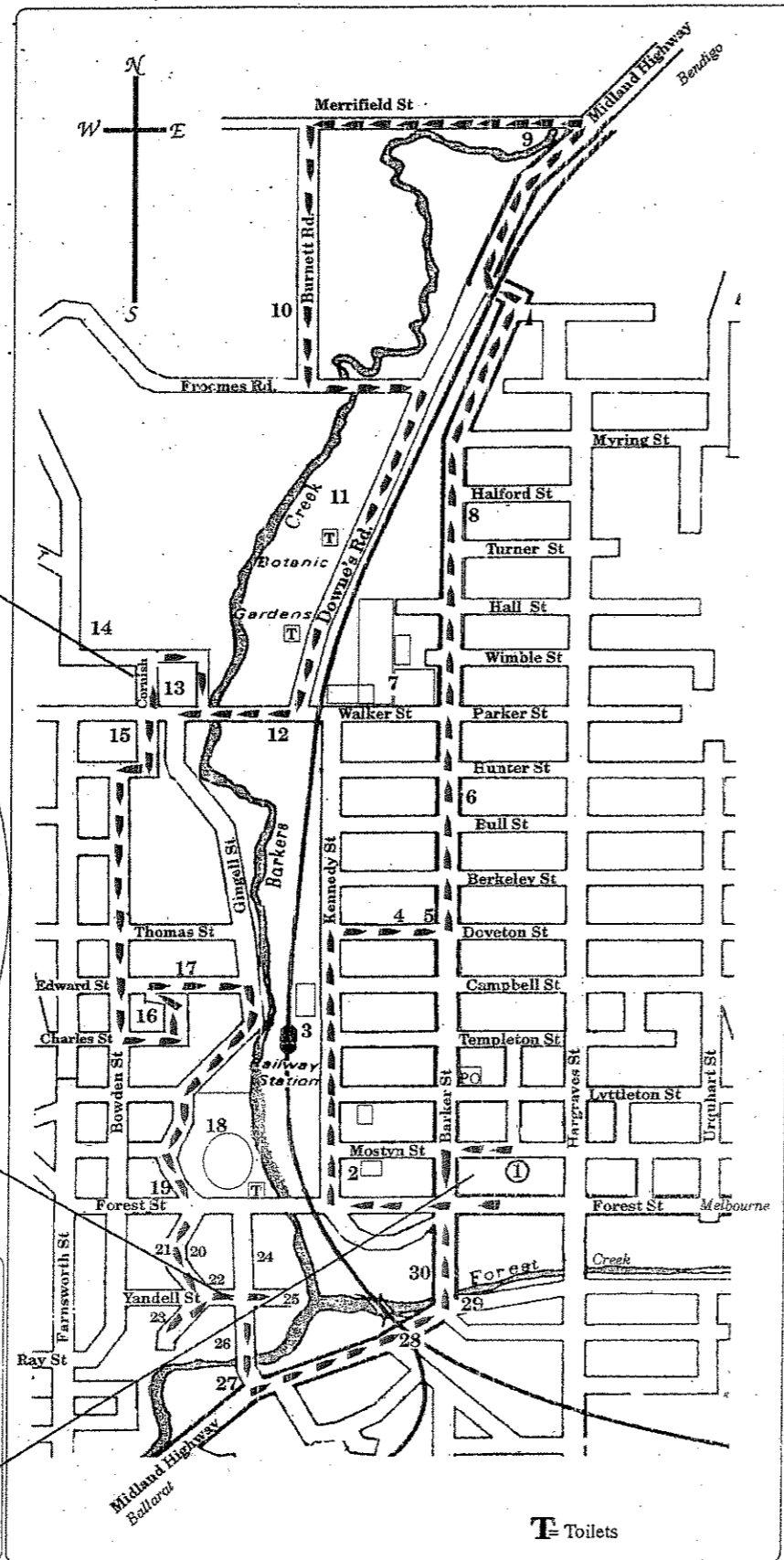
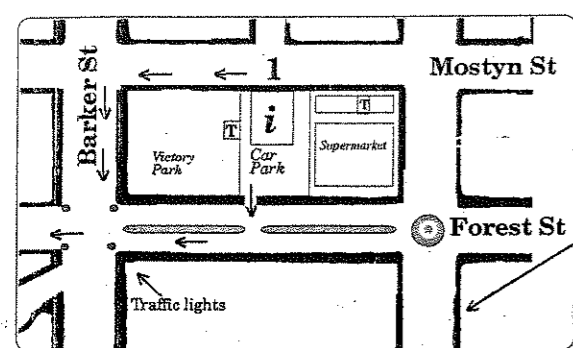
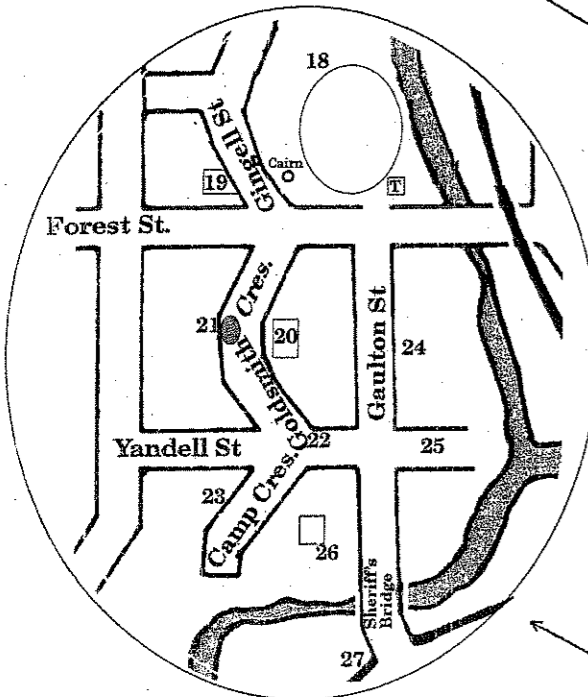
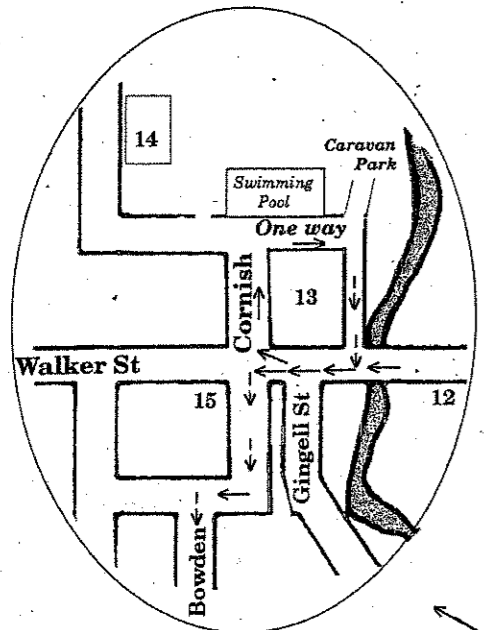
**Templeton Street**

William Campbell was a pioneer pastoralist who owned Strathloddon Station, amongst many others throughout Australia.

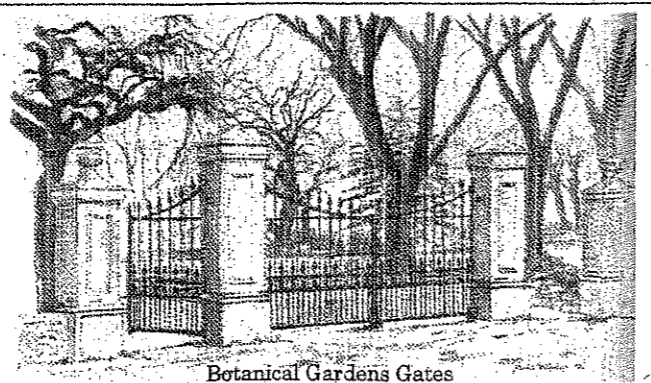
**Campbell Street**

Named first by the diggers as Forest Creek Road because it followed Forest Creek, which at that time coursed through dense bush.

**ORIGINS OF STREET NAMES**



**HISTORIC WESTERN TOWN  
CAR TOUR**  
45 - 60 minutes.  
START at  
①  
**MARKET BUILDING**  
Mostyn St. or from rear Carpark



**1. Market Building.** Located in Market Square, this building was opened in 1862 and operated as a market until the mid 1960s. Currently houses the Visitor Information Centre, Diggings Interpretive Centre and Exhibitions. Open daily 9-5.

**2. Agitation Hill.** Miners grievances were many in 1851-52. This hill, overlooking the official Camp was a popular meeting place for airing them. When the township was surveyed the ground was reserved for the Church of England (constructed 1854-58). On the opposite side of Mostyn Street is the former Presbyterian (now Uniting) Church (1894).

**3. Castlemaine Railway Station and Freight sheds.** The first train on this section of the Melbourne and Murray River Railway arrived at the Castlemaine Station on 9th October 1862. The extensive freight sheds have been converted to an Indoor Sports centre; a good example of recycling an historical building.

**4. 13 Doveton Street.** This house was for several years the boarding house for young ladies attending the Castlemaine Ladies School established by the Misses Langley, daughters of Bishop Langley of Bendigo. The school later became St. Catherine's College and transferred to Melbourne. Classes were held in the building on the corner (5).

**5. Masonic Lodge.** This building was originally built and occupied by the Primitive Methodist Church. After St. Catherine's removed to Melbourne, the Masonic Lodge bought the building and added an extension on the north side. Another example of recycling, in 2008 it was developed as a gym.

**6. Castlemaine North School (SS2051).** Established in 1878, this school absorbed the former Wesleyan Common School, No. 152. Clement Etchells served as head teacher at both schools, from 1859 to 1886.

**7. 'Flowserve': Thompson's Kelly & Lewis.** The Thompson family established a flour mill on this site in 1864. They later established an iron and brass foundry which diversified its operations to service the mining industry in Victoria and other States. Now manufacturing pumps and railway equipment.

**8. 336 Barker St. Lawson, previously Ythanbrae.** From 1908 to 1939 this was the home of Sir Harry S W Lawson, local solicitor, State and Federal politician and Premier of Victoria 1918-1924.

**9. Pleasure Gardens site.** In the 1860s, Mr. Frederick Hirschi, an energetic and community-minded Councillor opened the extensive Gardens he had established on this site beside Barkers Creek and invited the citizens of Castlemaine to come and relax, walk amongst beautiful surroundings and partake of refreshment. *North Castlemaine very early became the 'select' area in which to live. There are a number of substantial houses built on the 2 acre allotments along Burnett Rd. Amongst these is.....*

**10. Pine Hill, No.7 Burnett Rd,** built in the 1860s. In the 1870s and 1880s this was the home of Alexander Matthews, proprietor of the *Mount Alexander Mail*, Castlemaine's major newspaper.

**11. Botanic Gardens.** Established on the site of clay pits, brick making operations and the Castlemaine Cricket Club grounds, the gardens are a feature of the town. The Heritage Victoria listed site is planted with some rare species. *(Separate brochure available)*

**12. Victoria Carpets, formerly Castlemaine Woollen Mills,** which were established c.1874. They are one of the oldest mills still operating. Having survived two disastrous fires in the latter half of the 20th century, present production is carpet fabric.

**13. The Sunken Oval** was originally part of the Botanic Gardens and when constructed in 1884 was named Lake Augusta after the wife of the mayor of the day. It was however too shallow and became choked with weeds. It was drained, levelled and made into a play area in 1938, having acquired the name 'Lake Disgusta'.

**14. Mount Alexander Hospital.** Originally built as a Benevolent Asylum in 1860, the complex now provides the district with all essential health and aged services, offering both acute and extended care.

**15. Bridge Hotel.** Opened in 1866 as a store, it later became a licensed hotel and has been continuously licensed since.

**16. Old Castlemaine Gaol.** Opened in 1861, the gaol was built in two stages from stone quarried nearby. Between 1865 and 1876 there were 10 executions conducted in the gaol. It closed in 1990. *Guided Tours of the old gaol are available.* The carpark at the front provides a panoramic view across the town centre to the east and south across the valley to the new Loddon Prison near Wesley Hill

**17. Old Hospital Residences.** As you turn into Edwards Street the remains of the stone old hospital fence can be seen, and as you go down the hill, No. 4, the former Medical Superintendent's residence (1881) and No. 2 the Nurse's Training Quarters (1891).

**18. Camp Reserve.** Location for sporting groups and agricultural society. Land originally part of the Gold Commissioners' Camp. Used by Castlemaine Volunteer Rifles and Light Dragoons as a parade ground in the 1860s. A memorial cairn just inside the small entrance gate in Gingell St. commemorates the 100th anniversary of the discovery of gold.

**19. No. 31 Gingell Street.** Originally built as a hospital for the military, it then housed senior police officers. Superintendent Robert O'Hara Burke lived here prior to his ill-fated expedition.

**20. Former Court House.** Probably the oldest building in Castlemaine. Built as a Police Office and converted in 1852 to hold the first sitting of the Supreme Court on the Victorian Goldfields on 9 December 1852.

**21. Prisoners' Tree.** Local lore holds that prisoners were chained to this tree. It is recorded that prisoners were chained to logs beside a log lockup, which was sited near the Former Court House.

**22. Gold Commissioners' Camp Interpretive Board.** *(Separate brochure available)*

**23. No. 4 Camp Crescent, Military House.** One of the rare 1854 buildings still in existence. This military style house became, from 1858 to 1863, the home of Captain George Harrison, Police Magistrate.

**24. Gaulton St. houses.** This block of Gaulton Street contains some of the range of domestic architecture that can be seen in Castlemaine, from small gold miners' cottages to examples of classical, Victorian and Californian bungalow styles.

**25. Howe's Survey Tree.** This tree was marked by Surveyor William Howe in 1849 as a point for surveying the pastoral district prior to the discovery of gold in 1851. The large Mount Alexander Goldfield Commissioners' Camp was established in 1852 at this junction of Forest, Barkers and Campbells Creeks.

**26. Sheriff's Bridge and Cottage.** The cottage is hidden in the trees on the western side of the street, and only just visible in winter. The cottage and bridge were named when the Gold Commissioners Camp was located in this area. Richard Colles was Sheriff from 1854 to 1883.

**27. Cnr. Gaulton St & Midland Highway.** This building began as part of the Aitkin Flour Mill complex, and was later used by the Rasmussen family who ran a bakery here for many years. The flour mill was on the opposite side of the highway.

**28. Railway arched bridge.** Built by railway contractors Cornish and Bruce in 1862. Extended when the Maryborough line opened.

**29. Forest Creek.** Named by the diggers in 1851, because of the abundance of trees along the creek. The stonework, some built by prison labour, was part of an 1860s realignment of the creek, necessary to avoid flooding of the Market Square.

**30. Flour Mill and Distillery;** Originally constructed as a flour mill then part of the Cornish and Bruce railway workshops complex. The C&B property was sold in 1864, this building being bought by the Fitzgerald Brewing and Malting Company, manufacturers of Castlemaine XXXX beer; and the rest (now demolished) becoming coachbuilding works and depot for Robertson Wagner & Co, (Cobb & Co.) up until their relocation to Bathurst, NSW.