

Monster Meeting 2019...



Another fantastic Monster Meeting celebration! 2019's was another to remember with pride. And several photos have already been passed on – thanks to Jackie McMaster, Harley Parker and Sharna Crosbie for those. Hopefully, even more will arrive or be social media-ed in coming days...

And on the subject of thanks, how about:

Pat Healy who led us all through this year's journey, Parks Victoria staff for site preparation, car parking, marquees, sizzled sausages, games, gold panning, tent making, discovery walks, wagon haulage and packing up (all done with a smile too!), Jackie McMaster for display preparation and then arranging merchandise and sales, Frances Cincotta (Newstead Natives) for making the "return of gold" plant freebies available and the Chewton Domain Society for providing the PA system?



And the on-stage entertainment marshalled by Master of Ceremonies entertainer-extraordinaire, story-teller Jan Wositzky - Mick Coates' interpretation of the famed 1851 notice, two very brave young speech readers Sienna and Caelan AND a great great grandson of one of the original 1851 orators (Rod Donnelly) who reprised Mr. Booley's original presentation, musicians Jack Norton and Nic Lyons input, Tony Ryan who rocked into the quartz and the clay, Keith McKenry's unique alphabet poem, playwright John Romeril's poem after he pointed to his former residence "just up the road", and Kavisha Mazzella and the Volare choir's stirring presentation of Bella Ciao reminding us of the multi-culturalism of the 1851 goldfields. And in-between, the speeches from Rose Darling reminding us of the democratic "Chewton Way" that has helped shape our town (and save our pool!) and editor/owner of the Tarrangower Times in 1859 who addressed the issue (and importance) of freedom of the press?



And the visitors - the proud t-shirted unionists, the Bendigo Red Ribbon flag bearers, the Essendon base-ballers, the 3 Mount Alexander councillors, former Monster Meeting celebration speakers, Monster Meeting CD-making survivors, the Castlemaine Mail photographer, the Junior Ranger participants and their parents, the Burns Hill explorers, the many Diggers' flag t-shirt torso-ed audience members – and, really, everybody who was there and showed their appreciation so enthusiastically?

And, as with every wonderfully successful event, there are just so many people who made it that way. THANKS!

(Thanks, too, to Harley Parker, Jackie McMaster and Sharna Crosbie for sharing their images...and there's a lot more images appearing on Facebook!)





and the Monster Meeting in brief...

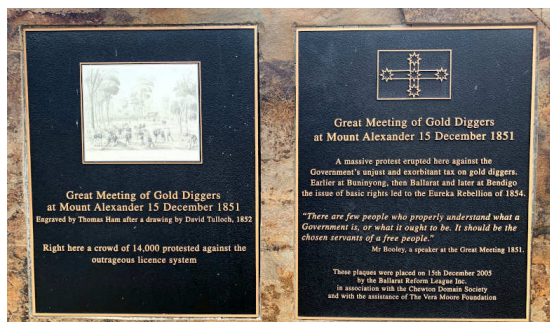
In the early 2000s a small group set out to raise the profile of this largely ignored important event – a key step in the development of Australian democracy as we now know it. Just as the diggers of 1851 took a stand, so did the small local group. And successfully too!

Under the auspices of the Chewton Domain Society and with great support from Parks Victoria notable landmarks followed, and included:

- In 2003 the annual celebrations began.
- In 2005 the site was marked with a plaque, courtesy of the Ballarat Reform League.
- In 2010 a song-writing competition was run.
- In 2012 a CD was produced and launched with a grand concert in the Theatre Royal.
- In 2017 the state government purchased privately owned land to help protect this site.
- In 2017 the meeting site was given heritage protection by the Heritage Council of Victoria.

So much has been achieved – but it must continue. Things can be forgotten very, very quickly.

The stand taken by the little local group less than 20 years ago seems to have paid off – just as the diggers' stand during the Forest Creek goldrush did.



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