**Ms DEBRA TRANTER’S TALK AT CASTLEMAINE CEMETERY ON FRIDAY, 27-11- 2020, WITH PLACEMENT OF THE PLAQUE FOR LITTLE AGNES ELIZA WILSON, INTERRED July 1859**

"The cost of the grave in 1859 was 2 pounds and 10 shillings, plus 1 pound to dig the grave - a lot of money at that time and together with the medical doctor's fees for attendance on Agnes Eliza, it was clearly beyond her parents' means to mark the grave.

The Gravedigger/Sexton was George Debney, 1859-1864; it also was George who planted many of the now heritage listed trees including the large cypress in D section (seen here with Shirley and Debra in this image) which cemetery records show was planted in 1859 - so in effect commemorating Little Agnes Eliza.

The main cemetery gate was down the middle of the cemetery and it is through here your ancestors would have walked to bury Agnes.

There were 548 burials in 1859 – 102 were children under the age of 5 - only 5 burials were for people over the age of 65

Agnes, in grave 462, is buried next to Grave 464 - 10 month old John Davis; Grave 463 - 2 year old Hugh Murray; Grave 461 Ann Brown aged 31; and Grave 460 Ann Samuel aged 2. Grave 462 is marked ***X*** on the cemetery map below left.

In the 1960’s the Trust made the decision to re-use the 3 sections of original burial ground leaving only Section C untouched. This decision was a breach of the Cemetery Act and therefore illegal. The Trust was told by the Dept of Health 4 times in writing to cease reusing old ground immediately, but these warnings were ignored until the final warning in 1994 when this senseless and tragic act of vandalism finally ended. The headstones of these graves were stacked along a side fence of the cemetery.

The gravedigger at the time informed the Trust that the ground was reused as the ground at the back of the cemetery was too rocky to dig, and the Trust deemed the front of the cemetery unsightly with so many unmarked graves. This is little comfort to descendants of these people, like me, my x5 great grandfather is buried in the corner and now someone else is buried over him.

It’s a dark period in our cemetery and one that is very frustrating as we cannot rectify the damage, we can only acknowledge this mistake and ensure that it never happens again. On behalf of the Trust I would like to thank the Wilson family for placing this memorial to honour and remember Agnes Eliza. It's beneficial not only for future generations of the Wilson family, but for the community as a whole.

Agnes Eliza Wilson's name will once again be spoken, her story told and thanks to the Wilson family, her story shared."  ***Debra***