

## DAVID BANNEAR

### The Monster Meeting Interviews #6

David Bannear interviewed by Jan 'Yarn' Wositzky

Approximate running time: 28 minutes

Written & co-produced by Jan 'Yarn' Wositzky

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Lighting & sound: Denise Martin

Executive producer for Chewton Domain Society: John Ellis

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### David Bannear

An archeologist, David Bannear, is a Heritage Officer with Heritage Victoria and the Department of Planning and Community Victoria. In his time living in Castlemaine David has compiled seven reports on the local gold mining country, having methodically trekked over every hill and gully recording locations of old mines and many other features. These reports are available from [fomad.org.au/downloads.html](http://fomad.org.au/downloads.html)

### Overview of Interview

To conclude the series, a philosophical and emotional take of the land of the gold rush: how the Monster Meeting shaped the gold seekers into being the Diggers which led to Eureka and spawned the skilled communities that continue to thrive, and how the gold rush towns are welcoming places to outsiders, where the story is still there in the country for us become part of and to inherit.

### Part 1 Introduction

0:00 David Bannear comes to Castlemaine as an archaeologist, finds that, unlike other places, history here belongs to everybody and one can be part of the history, even though you weren't born here.

### Part 2 Reading the Gold Rush Landscape

02:10 Comparison with landscape of gold rush at Castlemaine and with Bendigo/Ballarat where cities covered up the gold fields, whereas the Castlemaine gold rush landscape is still here to be seen – where the diggers lived and died.

### Part 3 The Communities of the Gold Rush

05: 01 Conversation about how the gold rushes turned the world from a vertical to a horizontal world. Diaries from the time tell of how

gold levelled society out, where people could be anyone they wanted to be, and how the diggers were young and brave.

- 08:32 Conversation about Aboriginal attitude to gold: how for Dja Dja Wurrung people the resources of the land were available to all, but not same with gold diggers whose economy was money based.
- 10:40 How originally it was illegal to mine for gold, then moved to Gold License system, which was all about control and administration.
- Imagining the unfairness of the Gold License, how it makes everyone a criminal.
- 13:09 How the gold rush people were community builders because women came with the men and started schools etc, how we are lucky because the people who came here from Europe were gifted people, building cities, railways, hospitals and libraries in a blink of an eye
- Part 4 Consequences and Meaning
- 17:08 Picturing what happened at the Monster Meeting, how the Argus newspaper said that the government had created a Frankenstein, had given the diggers a shape, a force that came together at the Monster Meeting and led to democracy.
- Discussion of ideas expressed at Monster Meeting: a government of the people; opportunity to make good for themselves; ideas of non-violence – and how the common experience of digging united the diggers; and how La Trobe by forcing them to gather at the Monster Meeting gave them an identity which led to democracy.
- 21:25 The spirit of hope born at that time, that an Australian identity of fairness comes from this time, which results in gold rush towns being accepting of newcomers including refugees.
- Discussion of links between gold rush and revolutions in Europe in 1840's, how diggers came here to find the old structures in place and rebelled, and won. David wishes he'd been there. The times were extraordinary because it was all young people, 20 year olds, it was their war, an excitement they'd never feel again, yet it's the oldies today who do the re-enactments.



## **Changes David Bannear**

1. At 12:01 there is a couple of seconds of black, followed soon after by 2 David voices running simultaneously. The correct audio is the one that begins with David saying: "Can you imagine..."
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