

THE RIESLING RAILWAY



The history of the Riverton to Spalding Railway, will be my book published in July 2018, to mark the centenary of the opening of the railway to Clare.

This book will not be sold through ordinary book shops. To purchase a copy, you will need to be on the distribution list for this newsletter. I expect to be in a position to accept payments late February, and take orders to mid-April 2018. **As we draw closer to publication, these newsletters will appear about every 8 weeks.**

Newsletter No. 7 December 2017

THE RAILWAY-CHILDREN'S ADVENTURE TRAIL. Note the use of the hyphen and apostrophe.

Monica McInerney has an article on her *website* called the *Real-Life Railway Children*. She tells of adventures and mischief that the McInerney children did around the Clare railway station. In particular there was a strip of wooded hill-side east of the station. For the Railways, it served two purposes. It provided elevation for two large water tanks that fed the stand-pipes, one at each end of the yard, for steam locomotive water. It also had contour channels to divert storm-water from the station yard. The tanks were removed in the 1971. The contour channels are partially choked and overflowing in places. The strip of land is about 750 metres long, and about 50 metres wide. Olive trees, gorse, Aleppo pines and Montpellier broom proliferate amongst the older-established eucalypts. Officially it is still "crown-land", but for about 30 years it has been abandoned and ignored.

Maura McInerney is one of the (now grown-up) railway-children, and has written to me, of forts and cubby-houses in this terrain, and added that getting lost trying to find the way home was half the fun. The McInerneys advise that there were other railway-children before them, and that any future purpose of the area could be something of an acknowledgement of the contribution by railway-families to Clare.

James Duggin and myself have hacked a pilot-trail through this land. There are tripping hazards of old fencing-wire and unopened pine-cones. I am conducting occasional expeditions along the trail, but don't presently recommend adventurers tackling the trail alone. Subsequent to that trail being opened up, there has been an assessment by native vegetation experts, Millie Nicholls and Anne Brown, who have identified patches of significant remnants.

It has superb views over Clare and offers potential as a significant tourism attraction. What is needed is more a community commitment to a clean-up than a bag full of money. There will be a chapter in the book dealing with the Railway-Children's Adventure Trail The photograph was taken on a recent expedition. Note the young olive tree in the foreground.

.From Left: Peter Wood and Allan Mayfield (of the Riesling Trail Management Committee), and James Duggin of the Clare Railway Centenary Group. The Riesling Trail Management Committee regard the clean-up and development as something that would be too great for their organisation to tackle alone. It is my belief that it would be a project done in stages over several years, and that as an event for the centenary-year the aim should be to draw up a concept plan, taking into account the inputs from various community groups.



MORE STORIES

It is a good thing there is deadline for completing the book because I keep turning up more stories, and otherwise it may never get finished. Here are some of the late additions.

The Riverton Art Heist. The theft of Robert Hannaford's priceless art works from the Riverton Railway Station.

The Legless Dog Café. The Riesling Trail briefly had its own "pop up" café in 2015, but the local council inspectorate was unbending in its reading of the regulations.

Engineman Eyes. For many years before the opening of the railway to Clare, people from the region travelled down and back on the Broken Hill Express. Matthew Eyes was one of regular drivers of the express and quickly earned a reputation for having the express arrive on time. He became the talk of Terowie when he sent explosives aloft in a balloon in a vain attempt at rainmaking. He gave public lectures and did stage-shows featuring electrical experiments, at which Bob the railway dog would be part of the attentive audience.

TOMMY DUKE



It has been part of Penwortham folklore for a long time that Tommy Duke, was not happy that the railcar service introduced in 1924 did not stop at Penwortham. He was at a meeting at Sevenhills addressed by Premier, Sir Henry Barwell, and pressed Barwell on the matter. Barwell agreed. It just happened that Tommy was off to town next morning, and baled up the railcar at Penwortham. The guard told Tommy that he had no right to stop the railcar and had committed an offence. He gave the guard his name and address, and added "see Barwell". There had been fierce debate amongst locals over which Penwortham crossing was the location of this event. I was eventually consulted, and by referring to SAR Weekly Notices, newspaper items, and railway timetables of the era, was able to settle the debate.

There was a commemoration ceremony on 5 November 2017. There are more Dukes here than at Buckingham Palace. Des Duke (nearest the camera), is the oldest surviving descendant of Tommy Duke. He is assisted by Laurie Duke in the unveiling of the storyboard. Kevin Duke is on the microphone on the right.

BRILL RAILCARS AKA BARWELL BULLS



I deal at some length in the book, on the Brill Model 55 and 75 railcars. They have a special relevance to the Clare line. The very first rural destination to be served by the model 55 railcars Clare. It was a Brill Model 55 railcar the Tommy Duke baled up. Additionally, Clare was the “capital” of Sir Henry Barwell’s electoral district of Stanley.

There are presently two separate projects to restore Brill railcars to operating condition. At the National Railway Museum there is slow progress on the restoration of railcar No. 8. At Goolwa, a small group of SteamRanger volunteers is working on the equally slow job of restoring railcar 43. For some years I have been contributing to both projects. Informal advice is that SteamRanger needs to find another \$100,000 for RC43. I will donate a copy of the book to the SteamRanger fund for RC 43 to use for fund-raising.

It will help solve another problem. Each book will be numbered, which has presented the difficulty of deciding who should get No. 1. It will be the book for RC 43. The photograph is Rowena Lewis, co-ordinator of RC 43 project at Goolwa. Behind her No.43 has been stripped down to bare metal to remove rust and buckles.

TIMETABLE OF JULY BOOK LAUNCH

I have set the following tentative programme.

Wed. 4 July (am) a private gathering to thank those in the Clare region who have contributed to the book.

Wed, 4 July (late am) ceremony in Clare re commissioning the silhouette cut-out of S class engine No. 130 at the site of the old Clare loco depot. Customers will be able to collect their books at the ceremony.

Wed, 4 July (pm) “Whistle-stops” at Auburn and Riverton to distribute books to local customers.

Thurs. 5 July. Orders for interstate and country customers, and those who will be unable to collect the book personally, will be mailed out.

Fri 6 July (Late afternoon). A catered function at the National Railway Museum, by invitation, for those in Adelaide who have helped with the book.

Sat 7, and Sun 8 July. “Back to Clare” weekend at the National Railway Museum. There will be the formal launch of the book. Any Adelaide people who have ordered and paid for a book will be able to collect it. There will be a quantity of books allocated to the National Railway Museum to sell in their bookshop. Their price will be more than the pre-publication price

Thereafter Adelaide customers may collect, by arrangement, from my home at Banksia Park or from the bookshop of the National Railway Museum at Lipson Street Port Adelaide

THE S CLASS SILHOUETTE



The silhouette steel cut-out had just arrived at Clare Metal Fabrications when this photograph was taken on 12 November. There is still much work to be done in building a frame and sitework ready for sleepers and rails.

FINDING THE HALF-WAY POINT

Sara Twigg-Patterson operates the Legless Dog B & B that was the location of the short-lived “pop-up” café, which she stated was about half-way along the Riesling Trail between Auburn and Clare. I offered to settle the matter. That halfway point is at the 83 mile 6 chains (rail miles from Adelaide). Using a nearby culvert as a known reference point, I was able to mark the spot. Apologies for the mixed imperial/metric measurements – it is 270 metres south of Sara’s gate. The 1975 bridge-survey of the railway shows exact measurements for every bridge, culvert, and drainage pipe on the line – more than 22 pages.. It will be included in the USB flash drive.

THE PRINT-RUN FOR THE BOOK

I have produced this book mainly for my own amusement. I had seen a need for a decent history of the branch-line and the development of the two-rail trails. The very last part of the book to be written will be the Epilogue in which I expect I will expand further. I have set the purchase price based on what it has cost me for the printing process. I have not costed my time, or the incidental expenses like reproduction fees for photographs, artwork by Harry Sherwin and Greg Judd, travelling to Broken Hill, or numerous trips to Officeworks for consumables. I am probably out of pocket about \$10,000. Some people have a boat, others go trekking in the Himalayas. I have made this book my indulgence, and have not skimped on any aspect of its production. The digital printing process is quite costly, and I am not in a position to print hundreds of copies in the expectation that there will be a ready market. There will be a quantity of books allocated to the National Railway Museum for sale through their bookshop on the weekend of 7-8 July.

PRICE

From the outset I had advised that I expected the price would be about \$100. For a while it looked like it would be \$90. The initial costing had been set according to a binding process that involved a strip of glue down the spine of the book. On further enquiry I discovered that the process could fail with repeated use of the book, and pages could fall out. One of the major markets for the book will be the accommodation houses in the Clare Valley, where it is expected the books will be a constant source of reference. The binding will be a sewn process, which comes at a cost of \$7 per book. The bottom-line will be a price of \$95, paid in advance, and to be picked up at one of the distribution points. I am still checking out the best option for packaging and postage, but early indications are that it will add another \$15 for delivery to the door in Australia. For GST purposes I am producing this book as a hobby. I am paying GST on all inputs. I am able to provide a tax invoice but will not quote an ABN, or separately specify GST.

With the next newsletter I will include an order form, which will have instructions about payment.

From mid-February, through to mid-April there will be a high-quality proof copy of the book at the Wilson Vineyard at Polish Hill River for inspection on weekends.

THE EMBOSSING THINGAMAJIG

I have had an embossing tool made and will use it to emboss the end-paper page at the front of the book.

And finally, if you know of others who may be interested in this book please forward a copy of this newsletter to them, or ask them to contact me, to be added to the distribution list.

Thankyou John Wilson wilsonriesling@internode.on.net

