

# 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 quote a price and accept payments about April 2018.

Newsletter No. 5 June 2017

**“Back to Clare”** Weekend. During the 1920s and 1930s, rural communities served by rail, organized “Back to ....” Events. The South Australian Railways provided special trains and promoted the events. On the weekend of 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the National Railway Museum at Port Adelaide will be doing a “Back to Clare” weekend. This event will be my Adelaide book launch. The Museum’s Bluebird railcar will be operating over the 1 km section of track within the Museum. Special Clare-line tickets will be printed. History groups from the Valley will set up “kiosks” in carriages and be available to do searches re ancestors who may have lived in the district.

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS**

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**BACK TO AUBURN**

**CELEBRATIONS**

**MARCH 12TH TO 15TH, 1936**

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**EXCURSION FARES**

In connection with the above Celebrations, **HOLIDAY EXCURSION TICKETS** will be issued to Auburn from **MARCH 9th to 14th, inclusive**, from all South Australian Railway Stations (Eyre Peninsula stations excepted).

These tickets will be available for return until **March 28th, inclusive**.

Break of journey is not allowed. Any passenger breaking the forward journey above of destination will forfeit the whole ticket (both halves) and if the journey be broken with the return half, it must be surrendered when the passenger alights, and will be forfeited.

No. 2071. S.A.R.L. 1936.  
FRANCIS TRAVIS, HIDEBOURN ROAD, ADELAIDE.

**S. H. WATSON, General Traffic Manager.**

**The Clare Library event.** It had been the intention that Harry Sherwin’s painting of the mid-1920s scene at the Clare Railway station should be put to work. It has, and has recently featured in the National Railway Museum’s *Catchpoint* magazine. The Clare Library had agreed to display the painting, and on 18<sup>th</sup> May a “hanging” ceremony was held. Guest of honour was to be Mary McInerney who had previously worked at the Clare Library. Mary’s husband, Steve, had been Clare’s last Station-Master. There will

be a chapter in the book about Steve McInerney. Monica McInerney is the daughter who now resides in Ireland, and is a noted fiction writer. Monica always manages to slip a bit of Clare into her novels. She has a new book out next month, entitled *The Trip of a Lifetime*, and will be in Australia to promote the book. She will be in Clare on Monday 17 July at the Clare Town Hall. Meanwhile check out her website and read the article *The Real-Life Railway Railway Children*. It is about her (railway) childhood in Clare. It's a hoot!

Unfortunately, Mary was forced to cancel her visit due to illness, but passed on her congratulations to the Railway Centenary Group.

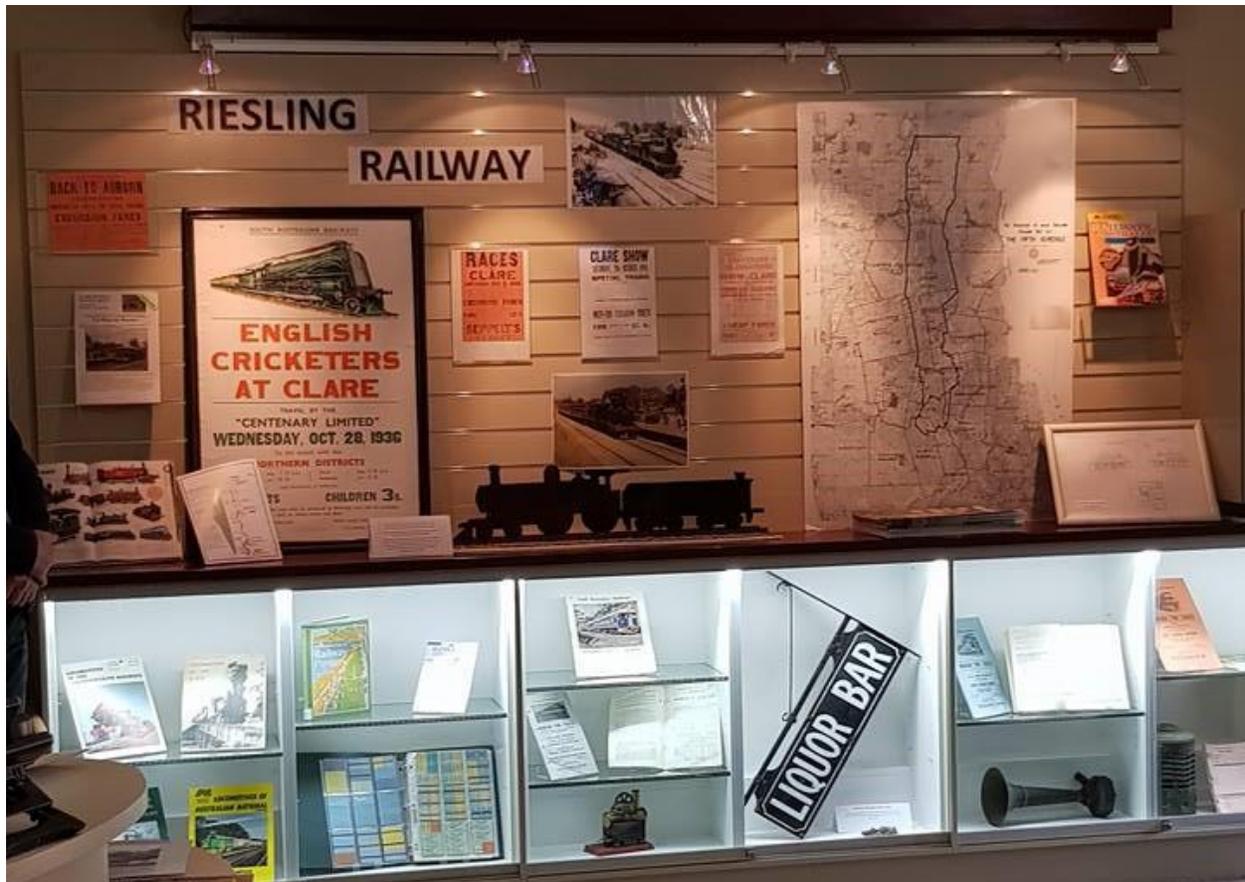


Our daughter-in-law, Tamara, gave the replica Riverton Refreshment Rooms uniform its first public outing at the Clare Library event. With her, is Barb Stevens from Riverton who had made the uniform. All agreed that she had done an excellent job. Thankyou Barb and Tamara.

Mary McInerney and daughter, Maura, has sent a card, with their best wishes for the Clare Railway centenary project. Val Tilbrook (pictured) read out their messages to the group at the Library.

Prior to the function, the Clare Library had set up display, which remained in place for several weeks after the event. Central to this display was the model silhouette cut-out of an S-class engine that had been made by James Duggin, representing the one that is planned to be placed over the ash-pit at the loco end of the old Clare station yard.

These photographs were courtesy of John Glistak of the Riverton History and Information Centre.



### **Flying a kite for Sir Henry**

Henry Newman Barwell was elected to the seat of Stanley in 1915 and represented the Clare district for many years. He became State Premier in 1920. He is the only MP from the Clare district to have achieved that high office. He was knighted in 1922. I deal with him at length in the book. His government had to deal with an antiquated and inefficient Railways Department that was a legacy of two decades of mismanagement. He personally selected an American, William A. Webb to be Chief Commissioner of the South Australian Railways. Reece Jennings published a biography on Webb in 1973

The appointment of Webb was the only positive step taken by any government to solve the rapidly worsening railway situation, which had steadily deteriorated because a succession of weak ministries prior to 1912 had been succeeded by an equal procession of foolish ones. Sir Henry Barwell can scarcely be called a statesman, but he was a strong and resolute Premier who, like so many other farsighted men, was little appreciated by his contemporaries, and only received full credit for his ability and long vision years after his departure from the political scene. He stood by Webb all the time and supported him. He never uttered a more correct remark than when he said in discussing Webb's appointment:

"I am satisfied that the Government have done the very best possible in the circumstances and we have the best man whose services are offering in the world".

History proves that Sir Henry chose the right man in appointing Webb. But where in Clare do we find him honoured? At the Clare Library function I "flew a kite", and suggested that the site of the Clare railway station, yards and surroundings be known as the "Sir Henry Barwell Railway Precinct".

## **BROKEN HILL**

My research into the shooting of Percy Brookfield at the railway station at Riverton in 1921 could not be complete without going to Broken Hill. I did not know what I was looking for, but had a sense that it would find me. I was not disappointed!

We had booked ourselves into a cabin at the Broken Hill Tourist Park, and on arrival, one of the first questions was whether we would like to join a daily mini-bus tour of the historical sites of Broken Hill. That was declined with thanks, pointing out that we were there on a mission, and in fact would be speaking at the meeting of the Broken Hill Historical Society that evening - "Oh, you are the doctor who is going to talk about Percy Brookfield!!". I had made the front page of the Barrier Daily Truth two days earlier!

There was a good audience at that meeting (which happened to fall on the Monday holiday). I had received valuable assistance over recent months from the Society's Secretary, Jenny Camilleri (who just happened to have received an A.M. Award that day). Surprisingly there is little by way of archival documentation surrounding Brookfield's shooting in Broken Hill that isn't available elsewhere. South Australia is the place where most of the archival documentation is held.

# Barrier Daily Truth

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**Tribute to the 'regen'**  
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**Women take centre stage**  
— Back Page



Percy Brookfield was a big, strong man. He tackled the gunman at Riverton Station in 1921 and was killed. "Jack", as he was known to the people of Broken Hill, was 45 when he died.

## Death of a hero

### Doctor to reveal more evidence

By Craig Brealey

Broken Hill's most famous political leader, Percy Brookfield, was murdered at a train station 96 years ago and to this day no-one can say for certain that he was not assassinated.

Now a doctor in Adelaide who has been researching the history of train lines in South Australia has come across new evidence about the sensational death of the Socialist firebrand and local hero.

On Monday night John Wilson will be in the city to present his findings to the public at the Broken Hill Historical Society's offices.

Dr Wilson is writing a book about the history of the Riverton to Clare and Spalding railway for its centenary next year. Brookfield was killed at Riverton station in March 1921.

The union leader had been elected by the people of Broken Hill in 1917 as a Labor Party member but his Socialist beliefs brought him into conflict with the party.

Brookfield supported not only the miners, but the Russian revolution and was among the leaders of the campaign against Conscription in World War One.

In 1919, he resigned from the ALP but the next year he stood for parliament again and was re-elected with an even greater majority as a member of the Industrial Socialist Labor Party.



The killer, Koorman Tomayeff, was never tried and spent the rest of his days in a mental asylum in Adelaide.

Brookfield now held the balance of power in the NSW Parliament and was taking the train from Broken Hill to Sydney to resume his seat when he was shot dead at Riverton by a Russian immigrant called Koorman Tomayeff.

The immediate suspicion that he had been assassinated gained credence when Tomayeff was quickly declared insane and locked away in a mental asylum. He was never put on trial.

The evidence in the case has slowly been revealed over the years, the latest being in Broken Hill-born author Paul Robert Adams' excellent biography 'Australia's Best Hated Man: The Life and Death of Percy Brookfield' published in 2010.

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**BROKEN HILL TODAY: 16°**

**SUN:** 17°

**MON:** 16°

**TUE:** 16°

**FULL REPORT:**  
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## THE USB Flash Drive

I am unapologetic that my book is going to cost about \$100. It will include a USB Flash Drive which will be crammed with useful material. One of my "customers" declared that this USB would be worth \$100 on its own. It includes the following:

The 1929 "Railway Facts" book published by the SAR.

The entire 1924 SAR Public Timetable booklet.

Detailed drawing of railway yards of major stations.

Linear maps of the Rattler and Riesling Trails

The 1913 Railway District map

The 1975 bridge survey for the section from Riverton to Barinia

The file on the Percy Brookfield shooting at Riverton in 1921

Special train placards such as the Auburn one above, and The English Cricketers at Clare.

Train Notices for Clare show trains, and some other specials.

### **ASHLEY WALSH ABC 891**

Over the next few months I expect to be doing occasional radio interviews. These sessions have been organized by National Railway Museum's Executive Officer (and media consultant) Bob Sampson. The first of these will be at 11.30 am Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July, and the topic will be the Railway Refreshment Rooms at Riverton.

### **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE BOOK**

The first 110 pages are now at the page-layout process by the printer. Barring some minor adjustments that is now complete.

I expect to be in a position to set a price for the book in early April and to close the order-book at the end of May, with printing to be done during June. There will be two public book-launches. The first will be on the morning of the centenary, Wednesday 4 July, and will be in the Clare Valley. The second will span the Friday 6 July to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July, at the National Railway Museum at Port Adelaide. Orders that cannot be collected at one of the launch venues will be mailed out during the following week.

I can understand that people may be hesitant about paying \$100 for a book unseen. To those people I can say that during March and April 2018, there will be a high-quality printer's proof of 90+% of the book for inspection, at The Wilson Vineyard at Polish Hill River during weekends. Plan to spend a day or two in the Clare Valley. I will also set aside two days to visit Broken Hill. Dates to be advised.

The Riesling Trail Management Committee has kindly granted me space on their website for a book synopsis. It is updated every few months.

<http://rieslingtrail.com.au/history/the-history-of-trains-by-john-wilson/>

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

**Thankyou John Wilson wilsonriesling@internode.on.net**

