

CLARE REGIONAL HISTORY GROUP NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021



• WE ARE BACK FOR 2021 AND WELCOME ALL WHO WISH TO VISIT AND USE THE RESOURCES OF THE HISTORY COLLECTION EVERY FRIDAY 1.00—4.00PM

Life member and long—serving volunteer Val Tilbrook was recognized with a Premiers Certificate for Outstanding Volunteer Service in September 2020. The certificate was presented at an event at St. Barnabas Church hall. State executive of the National Trust attended, in addition to many of Val's friends and fellow volunteers of the local branch of the National Trust, Clare Regional History Group and U3A.

CRHG COMMITTEE

Chairperson : Gerald Lally

Secretary : Val Tilbrook

Curator & Treasurer : Helen Perry

Committee : David Bond, David Spackman, Wendy Spackman, Jon Ruwolt,

Gail Weckert, Josie Hudson

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of a cool refreshing
drink of our

**TONIC
SHANDY**

It is a great thirst
reliever on hot
days.

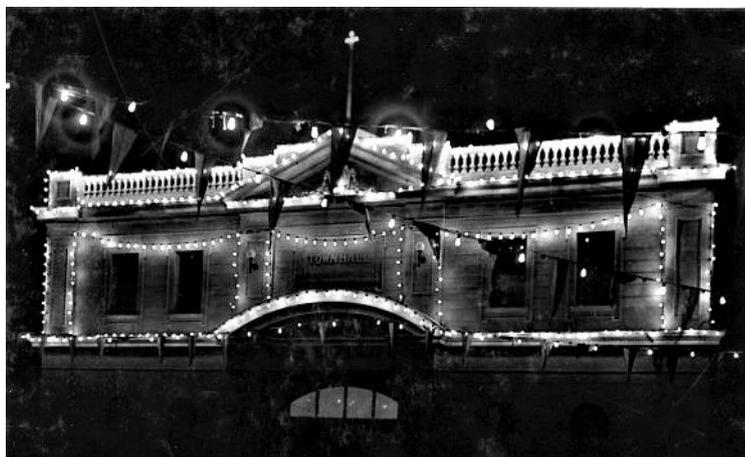


**Clare Mineral
Waters Co.**

BACK TO CLARE

In 1928 as part of the successful Back To Clare celebrations it was decided to conduct a Queen Competition as a fundraiser. Four young ladies were selected, Queen of Commerce Miss Vera Gillen, Queen of Sports Miss Phyllis Harmer, Queen of Children Miss Jean Knappstein and Queen of Agriculture and Production Miss Leila Roberts. Many fundraising events were held in the months leading up to the celebrations.

One such event was in the form of a “Hayseed Ball” in aid of the Queen of Agriculture (Miss Leila Roberts) held in the Town Hall on a Tuesday evening. A large crowd attended many dressed in hayseed costumes of varied descriptions. Those in fancy dress were paraded around the hall and the judge Mrs. R.E.H. Hope presented the prizes. Old time and present day dancing was indulged in with music being supplied by the Maynard Bros. (George & Harry) concertina and accordian and the Clare Jazz Band under Mr. H. Snashall with encores requested for every dance.



The brightly illuminated Town Hall

On the night that the winning Queen was announced it was standing room only in the Town Hall with many unable to gain admission. Queen of Commerce Miss Vera Gillen was crowned Queen of the Carnival having won by a huge majority. The grand total raised by the four Queens was £1,562/8/1 which was a considerable amount back then.

The Queens were paraded through the brightly decorated main street with the brass band leading the way. A good time was had by all with dancing in the Town Hall and out in the main street George and Harry Maynard provided old time dance music with concertina and accordian. It was noted in the Northern Argus that *“It was early morning before the crowds dispersed”*.

**HAVE YOU A STORY TO TELL OR AN INTERESTING ARTICLE
WE WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWS LETTER**

Email—dbond@bigpond.net.au

PIGEONS WERE THE HEROES

By Lillian Hague

Mr. Gavan (Riley) Gillen joined the 2nd. A.I.F. at the start of World War 2.

As radio reception was not reliable in jungle areas, Gavin suggested carrier pigeons and the idea was acted upon. Due to his extensive experience with homing pigeons, he was discharged for special duty in July 1940 to establish a carrier pigeon communication service.

While stationed at Keswick trials were held for three months, releasing the pigeons at Mt. Lofty. They took seven minutes to reach Keswick compared with the 23 minutes dispatch riders took on their motor bikes. Gavan was sent north with 41 of his own birds, through the Northern Territory, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. While in Bougainville he was in charge of the breeding loft. Each unit of soldiers was supplied with Carrier – homing pigeons and two birds were sent out at a time with identical, often coded messages attached to their legs in metal containers to ensure that at least one message got through.

The casualty rate for pigeons was surprisingly small, probably due to the dense jungle. Each side had carriers and riflemen on both sides trying to stop information getting through.

While in Port Moresby New Guinea, Gavan caught a Japanese bird, broke him in the loft and it went on to carry 64 messages for him. To break a bird in was a simple matter of holding the pigeon in the loft for a time, giving him a mate and letting him get used to his surroundings.

The Japanese having imported pigeons from Australia prior to the war had a Japanese Australian cross which was not as good as the pure Australian breed. During the war there were 64,000 pigeons registered with the Army in South Australia and Gavan said “when called upon the pigeon fliers gave their best birds”. Countless lives were saved by birds carrying important messages from the front line troops back through to bases.

Gavan recalls a time when a soldier was wounded and his two mates would not leave him alone in the jungle. They sent two pigeons off for help with the added message, “Please God speed these feathered angels on their way, give them a safe journey”. It took only minutes for the birds to get back to base , but 16 hours for a patrol to rescue the wounded man and his friends.

The Dicken Medal is awarded to birds and dogs who served as messengers during the war and is the equivalent of the Victoria Cross. Photographs of the Australian Pigeons with their medals alongside can be seen at the War Museum in Canberra. When the war was over the Homers were not allowed back into Australia from the Islands in case of disease.

MISMANAGEMENT OF STAGECOACHES

THERE ARE MANY STORIES ABOUT THE COACH TRIP FROM SADDLEWORTH TO CLARE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THIS IS JUST ONE OF THEM FROM A DISGRUNTLED PASSENGER WRITING TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN REGISTER IN 1876.

Surely the customs of the road and especially country mail coaches admit of some improvement. Here is the sort of thing that happens between Saddleworth and Clare, a distance of 22 miles.

After an adventurous journey of less than a quarter of a mile from the station the coach pulled up at the nearest public house, where it is kept standing for nearly 10 minutes. The driver, before he becomes lost to sight within the bar provides for the safety of the coach by the masterly device of loosely twisting his reins round the break, from which they have nearly untwisted themselves by the time he returns.

Luckily the horses are above taking a mean advantage and stand still. After seven miles more we are at Auburn, and exhausted nature again demands refreshment. Here there is a stoppage of nearly half an hour for dinner and liquoring up, although it is not much more than half past twelve and there are only fifteen more miles to travel. "Fair Play" requires that one public house should not be favoured above another house. When we have gone this first seventeen miles we find that we have stopped at five of these establishments and expended on them over three quarters of an hour. The horses of course must make up for this in speed, but then they are only brutes.

On the return journey it was much the same thing. The coach started at 6am, stopped at every public house on the road and yet by dint of hard driving arrived at the Saddleworth public house 35 miles before the down train was due at the station. At that hostelry it remained as a matter of course for the next twenty five minutes, while the lady passengers patiently awaited the leisure of those of the nobler sex within the bar, and those of the men who were not inclined to drink or to wait on the humours of their bibulous companions had to find their way to the station on foot. This sort of thing is intolerable. If so much time can be wasted on the road the hour of departure might well be fixed later. On the up journey the coach was heavily loaded with baggage which was ingeniously adjusted so as to promote a sense of the complete inferiority of the passengers in the scale of being and their subjection to the will of the driver.

One unfortunate who begged that a bag of plaster of paris might not be placed in immediate juxtaposition with a black coat was told, "Oh we don't take no account of black coats here!" In spite of the load of baggage moreover two men beyond the full number of passengers were allowed to get on the roof of the coach and make seats for themselves on portmanteaus which certainly were neither made nor packed with a view to such a contingency. I asked whether this was common and was told "Oh bless ye, the reg'lar thing". As for fines no one seems to dream of laying an information. A casual visitor to the colony would form a curious impression of our progress and our manners were he to judge by his experiences of the road on such a journey. Under such conditions one would not wish to be very frequently a traveller.

N O T I C E.
On and after FRIDAY , 6th December, J. HILL & CO. will RUN a COACH from CLARE to SADDLEWORTH , starting from Clare at 7 a.m., and returning from Saddleworth on arrival of Adelaide train, arriving in Clare at 1 p.m. Passengers booked at Lawson's Hotel, Clare.
J. HILL & CO., Proprietors.

L OST, from the Coach, between Saddleworth and Clare, a PARCEL , containing bottle. Ten shillings reward to any one returning same to driver of mail coach between Clare and Saddleworth.

BOOKS & CDs FOR SALE

Ashby, Marj (1989) **CARINYA 1956 - 1989 A Peaceful and happy home**, South Australian Country Women's Association, Clare Branch, Clare, S. Aust. \$5

Bellman, Elinor A. (1995), **SADDLEWORTH - Hub of the Wheel**, Saddleworth, S. Aust \$35

Bond, David (2014) **CLARE SHOW "A fine all round display" for 150 years**. Written to celebrate 150 years of shows in Clare. \$33

Brinkworth Centenary Book Committee (1992), **MAGPIE CREEK JUNCTION a history of Brinkworth and district 1892 – 1992**, Brinkworth, S. Aust Recently reprinted. \$50

Cross, Jack (2016), **Two Crosses: Ephraim and Jack - a proletarian history**: including life in the unusual village of Armagh 1840 to 1910; as well as on Bungaree Station after 1860, Printak Pty Ltd, Adelaide, SA. 145 pages, illustrations, maps, portraits, facsimiles \$30

Dickeson, Helen (1993), **CLARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - a history 1856-1988** 120pp. Includes baptisms, marriages, burials, and extensive index. \$14

Ellis, Julie-Ann (1995), **HARD-YACKA - The story of a Mid-North town in South Australia**, Yacka Historical Group \$40

Hawker, Frankie and Rob Linn (1992), **BUNGAREE – Land, Stock & People**: History of Hawker family and Bungaree Station, Turnbull Fox Phillips, Adelaide 230pp \$45

Haynes J. & E.J. Schmaal (1980), **CLARE – A BACKWARD GLANCE** \$8

HEAD OF THE RIVERS – Black Springs, Manoora, Waterloo (1992) \$25

Johnson, Win N.

- (1988), **COTTAGES AND CAMEOS OF CLARE** by 100pp, illus. \$25

- (1986), **CLARE CAMEOS** Includes oral histories of our older Clare residents as interviewed by Win in the State's Sesquicentennial year. 2nd ed. \$15

- (1991), **BLYTH - a silo of stories 1860 - 1990** A comprehensive history of the town and district of Blyth, including family stories, farming, community and sporting activities. Excellent photographs, many in colour. \$45

- (1994), **THE METHODISTS OF CLARE 1851 - 1977** 124pp. Indexed. \$12

- (2010), **FROM WHERE I SIT**, A Collection of articles on chosen themes written over past times \$16

- (2011), **A History of Ngadjuri Lodge Trust** \$10

- (2001), **JUST AS IT WAS** Tells the story of Win's life with humour and affection. 96pp including photos. \$20

Jones, Coralie (2014), **CLARE VALLEY, SA** A pictorial souvenir. \$20

Lally, Gerald A.

- (2004), **HILL RIVER A Valley of History** \$30

- (2006), **A LANDMARK OF FAITH Church of the Immaculate Conception, Mintaro and its parishioners 1856-2006** \$35

- (2012) **TIMES PAST – a pictorial history of Farrell Flat 194pp.** \$30

Lally, Gerald, et al (2010), **SOUTH CLARE SPORTS CLUB – Celebrating 50 years of success 1960 – 2010** \$20

Linn, Rob (2011), **The story of Bungaree Station** (Illus) \$17

MARRABEL & DISTRICT REVISITED – additional material of the 'early days' at Marrabel \$25

Neill (nee Mickel), Laurel (2012), **"A WALK WITH LAUREL" ; walking tour of the buildings and families of Farrell Flat from the memories of the period 1929 – 1939** \$5

Noye R. (Bob) J.

- (1998), **CLARE - A DISTRICT HISTORY** - a definitive history of the town and district, including photographs, sketches & maps. Essential starting point in Clare research. 231pp. 4th edition, with new index. \$20 (\$15 for members)

- (2003), **TALKING HISTORY – Tales of Clare S.A.** 50 article published weekly in *The Northern Argus* \$15

Pattullo, William

- (1991), **THE LAND HISTORY OF POLISH HILL RIVER 1842 – 1990**. Details the ownership history of 120 sections of land in Polish Hill River, to the edge of Mintaro township. \$25

- (1986), **THE OWNERS OF STANLEY FLAT 1836 – 1986** reprinted 2015 \$30

Schmaal, Jean

- (c. 1986), **THE INCHQUIN STORY**, Clare & District Branch, National Trust, [1986?] Clare S.Aus \$5

- (1987), **A QUIANT COURTHOUSE** Clare & District Branch, National Trust, Clare S.Aus \$5

Simons, J.J. 'Boss' (1944), **THE CLARE I REMEMBER**

13 articles published in *The Northern Argus* in 1944, describing the Clare of Simons' boyhood in the 1880's and 1890's. Fully indexed. \$15

Tilbrook, E.H. 'Clarion' and M Tilbrook (1939), **THE PATHS OF GLORY LEAD BUT TO THE GRAVE a history of Clare Cemeteries** (originally published in *The Northern Argus* in 1939) Re-released with updated index \$20

Warrior, Fred et al (2005), **Ngadjuri – Aboriginal people of the Mid North region of South Australia**, Meadows SA, SASOSE Council Inc \$40

Wilson, John (2018) **The Riesling Railway**, self-published, printed by Openbook Howden, St Marys SA 5042, photographs, illustrations, maps, drawings \$110

CD-ROMS

HEADSTONE PHOTOS FROM LOCAL CEMETERIES (CD Rom) (2005) \$10



THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF ROTARY CLUB OF CLARE 1964 – 2011 (DVD) \$20 Limited release

FEDERATION CD ROM - history of the Clare & Gilbert Valley District for all computer buffs and their friends - a great gift idea! (2002) \$10

