

YOUR GUIDING LIGHT

South Australian Tourist Guide Association

SATGA NEWSLETTER

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Greetings from your Editor,

With the records for the month of June tumbling, it has been the driest since 1967 and according to the bureau some of the coldest minimum temperatures for 60 years. It is of no surprise therefore, to see a number of our members head for the warmer parts of Australia, or for a 'summer' overseas. What a contrast it is to the year 2016, when Adelaide recorded 150mm of rain in June.

This brings me to a different kind of anniversary that is currently commemorated by Australia Post and will be noted with a new issue of stamps in July.

For rail-buffs everywhere, this is a milestone to recognise. The TRANS AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY will be 100 years in action, connecting west to east, once the final stretch of railway line between Pt Augusta and Kalgoorlie, 1,690 km long was completed. The railway line consumed over 2 million sleepers and 140,000 tons of rail. The official opening ceremony was actually held on 22nd Oct 1917.

A promise made by state representatives to create such a rail connection persuaded Western Australia to finally join the Federation in 1901. It took 5 years of arduous construction work across the Nullarbor plains, for the "tea and sugar" train to make history. This event however installed Fremantle as the first and last port of call for overseas mail, previously efficiently managed in Adelaide, being a more central location on the continent reachable by sea.

We know of the first Transcontinental Express that it had 10 carriages (including one dining, 1 lounge and 1 vice-regal car) pulled by steam engines, with 67 passengers aboard and arriving over 3 hours late in Cook from Pt Augusta, due to frequent stops for the locomotives to cool down. This would be the ongoing saga of such a journey for years to come and an opportunity to bring some 'real' adventure stories home to share. Finally the first train arrived 42 hours later in Kalgoorlie and history was made. Today's train makes Rawlinna one of the stops to be remembered as well as the almost intact settlement of Cook.

P.T.

We visit the Food Forest

In late May some of our members visited a Permaculture property near Gawler known as the 'Food Forest'. Certified as organic with NASAA since 1995, it has for some time turned into a Learning Centre welcoming diverse interest groups from all backgrounds. The property produces over 150 varieties of fruit, nuts, vegetables and herbs.

We were greeted by Anne-Marie, a keen believer in sustainable homes, gardens and farms. This model of a food forest, created near the Gawler river, is an example of serious all round work, to reduce our environmental footprint.

Here the concept includes passive solar designed buildings made from straw-bales, adding composted toilet systems and cleaning run-off water through reed beds. Some 88 bird species have been recorded around the farming area and even a vineyard produces good crops of red and white varieties.

We tasted pistachios grown nearby as well as dried apricots, apples and raisins. A stall at both the Gawler and Adelaide Farmers Markets will help to re-stock your supplies of organically grown produce. A thank you to our secretary Thelma for organising this outing.



SATGA members at the Food Forest

P.T.

Who is BIG JOHN

Across Australia exploration in the nineteenth century had many a tragic end with Bourke and Wills and also Ludwig Leichhardt perhaps the better known names not returning alive. But when the South Australian Relief Expedition was organised, the man to lead it, John McKinlay, became the first European to lead a team from the south coast to the north and return safely.

He arrived with his brother on board the Elizabeth, in Hobart on 8th December 1836. Born in Dunoon, Scotland on the 26 August 1819 he was one of five siblings to his father's second wife Catherine. Moving from Hobart to his uncle's property near the Murrumbidgee gave John a taste for bush life and further adventure. Droving cattle along the Murray Darling system eventually brought him to Adelaide. Mixed up with other early settlers from the Murray to Broken Hill his name and knowledge of the outback filtered to the then Colonial Secretary Charles Sturt and the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Henry Young. With the fate of Burke's expedition unknown, the SA Government saw its chance to beat its next door Victorian leaders to the claim of reaching the top end. The Treasury allocated £1,200 and urged that no time be lost. The expedition departed in September 1861 with camels, horses and bullocks as well as sheep for the Cooper Creek area, making their major camp at Blanchwater. Learning to survive with the help of local aborigines they eventually tracked down signs of the Burke and Wills expedition, but also learned that Howitt who was sent from Victoria already knew the fate and had discovered their graves. The party continued to head north with fresh water always a challenge for men and beasts. When, in May 1862, they eventually reached a river of about 600yards wide, they noticed the water being slightly brackish, rising and falling about four feet, with ducks, spoonbills, ibis and some pelicans. They were within the influence of the sea. On his return to Adelaide he reported favourably of the location near the mouth of the West Alligator river and an eventual settlement, with plenty of building stone and timber available. McKinlay retired to an estate named "Oaklands" in Gawler where he lived with his wife Jane. A Street is named after him and at the northern end of Murray Street, a memorial, some 35 feet high has the inscription: To John McKinlay, a Chief amongst Australian Explorers.



John McKinlay 1819-1872

PT

Just a little more train news.

The name for the old Transcontinental is now a worldwide travel attraction known as the Indian-Pacific. It departs from Sydney's Central station on Wednesdays and makes its way across the continent taking 4 days. If you choose the top platinum class, you will pay more than 10 times a flight ticket from Sydney to Perth and \$2000 more than a shared gold-class cabin. But the success of this journey is supported by a few statistics. After converting the standard, subsidised "Red Class" with some luxury and opulence this 5-star travel is booked out 8 months ahead at a starting price of \$3,698 per person in platinum class, not a bad business prospect. Compared with other icons around the world like the Paris to Istanbul Orient Express from \$11,600 per person and the Rocky Mountaineer in Canada between Vancouver and Jasper from \$2,900, this railway journey is scoring good points. The success of the gamble comes as no surprise to Simon Pielow of Europe's Luxury Train Club, who began his bookings business for 30 of the world's most expensive train journeys in 2013 and has almost 17,000 members, largely from the US, Canada, Britain and Ireland. He quotes that most countries with a developed passenger rail service also offer luxury train travel.

Other favourites include the Teen Crucero in Ecuador, Peru's Belmond Andean Explorer and the Maharajah's Express in India

P.T.

Wilderness walk

The newly launched 5 day Wilderness Trail on Kangaroo Island introduces fit visitors to a mix of some rugged, remote and spectacular coastline of the Southern Ocean. Starting at Rocky River the first day walk can be done in about 4 hours to make the 12km distance to Rocky River where we find the Cup Gum camping ground. Day two is just a little longer, with 7 hours needed to cover 14km to Cape du Coudic, camping at the Hakea ground for a good night rest. Next day some more spectacular scenery passing the historic Weirs cove and Remarkable Rocks when after 6.5 km you will reach Sanderson Bay.

Day four offers high energy coastal trekking at its best, along towering cliffs and massive swells below. You are now near Hanson Bay's Southern Lodge and conclude for the day after 13.5 km at the Tea Tree camping ground located adjacent to the historic Grassdale property.

For the final day's walk it is with almost a stroll that 7.5km can be walked in 2.5 hours, with beautiful sugar gums and in the wetter months wild orchids and fungi. Once you reach the Kelly Hill Caves complex the trek is concluded and you have covered some spectacular territory.

My commemorative walk some years ago was a touch longer over 7 days, adding Murray's Lagoon and American River to the finish line at Kingscote.



At the memorial plaque to commemorate the Africaine tragedy in Nov 1836

KI development

Will a \$30m wharf lure cruise ships to another destination on KI? A proposed deepwater wharf at the Island's Smith Bay, some 10km northwest of Kingscote is said to turbocharge tourism by enticing more visitors to the island. Kangaroo Island Plantation Timbers (KPT) wants to build the wharf to ship timber and woodchips from its forestry operations.

But, as with all developments, there are opponents to the scheme. Local aquaculture operators are one group and logging trucks together with tour coaches may also have difficulties to be accepted, unless all timber movements are scheduled for the off-season and the connecting road to the landing pier is a sealed road. Direct landing for cruise ships, rather than using transfer crafts and nominating a registered Port could be welcomed from a tourist guide perspective. As we have found out in the past, Penneshaw has no facilities to disembark on a permanent basis.

P.T.

Events around Adelaide

June 30 – July 2

Adelaide Boat Show (Showgrounds)

July 9

Stadium Stomp (Adelaide Oval)

July 5

Sarah Blasko indie melodies at the Adelaide Town Hall

July 14-30

Umbrella Winter City Sounds

Live music at various venues in the CBD

To celebrate Adelaide's official recognition as a UNESCO city of music.

July 30 – Aug. 27

3rd Biennial SALA portrait exhibition.