

# CLARE REGIONAL HISTORY GROUP NEWSLETTER WINTER 2021



Welcome to our Winter 2021 Edition with apologies for the lack of an Autumn Newsletter.

## **PROGRESS IN THE 1920's**

The years following World War 1 saw a building boom in Clare. Mr. E.W. Wells came to Clare with his Wife in 1912 and established a Bakery business which became very successful so much so that the old premises proved inadequate for the purpose.

A new structure of modern design, combining business premises and a residence was built. There were 7 rooms in the residence and two large rooms which would comprise the shop and a storeroom. The Northern Argus edition of Friday April 14<sup>th</sup> 1922 continues the description – *“In addition there is a splendid cellar, while the bakehouse has undergone remodelling to cope with the increased trade. Upon entering the shop many up to date features are noticeable, chiefly the windows with polished white tiles and mirrors at each end as well as at the back. Marble top counters with bread bins underneath, have sliding doors being lined with tin, which makes them dust, mouse and fly proof. Special plate glass cases are provided for displaying cakes, confectionery and patent medicines. Many other fittings such as*

*cake racks with sliding doors, cupboards for packages and delivery parcels (all dust, mouse and fly proof) large shelves and general equipment go to show how efficiently the proprietor will be able to cater for public requirements. In the storeroom plenty of space is available and a rack let into the wall facilitates the transition of goods from the bakehouse to the shop. The large cellar provided for storage purposes, mainly butter, cheese, eggs has slate slabs inlet into the wall and the walls have been specially cemented with a preparation which makes it absolutely damp proof. Taking the whole building into consideration it reflects great credit upon the contractor Mr.*

*R. Robins and Mr. Wells informed us that he is more than satisfied with the way the work has been carried out in every detail. Out beyond the bakehouse is a clean tar-paved yard, in fact the whole premises are a model of cleanliness, demonstrating the ability of the management and efficiency of the staff. A 7hp Hornsby engine is of material assistance in pumping sufficient water for use in the bakehouse as well as working the wood sawing plant, which replenishes with all speed the supply of wood used in firing the large ovens."*

Today this building houses MGA Insurance Brokers.

Upon his retirement in 1940 Mr. & Mrs. Wells built a home on the banks of the Hutt River at the rear of the bakery on the site of their own gardens. These gardens were featured in the 1928 Clare Newsreel. During his 37 years in Clare with his love of Floriculture he had been a devoted member of the Committee of the Clare A&H Society where his love of flowers and knowledge proved of great value to the Society. Mr. Edward William Newman Wells passed away at the age of 71 in 1949.

## **CRHG COMMITTEE**

Chairperson : Gerald Lally

Secretary : Val Tilbrook

Curator & Treasurer : Helen Perry

Committee – David Spackman, Wendy Spackman, Jon Ruwolt

Gail Weckert, Josie Hudson, David Bond

Newsletter Editor – David Bond

Phone – (08) 88424100 (when open)

Email – [ClareHistory@gmail.com](mailto:ClareHistory@gmail.com)

**The Annual General Meeting of the Clare Regional History Group will be held on Friday August 13<sup>th</sup> at the Taminga Hotel 6.00 pm for 6.30 start.**



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## LARGE CROWD AT DRAMATIC SHOW

(From Northern Argus 1962)

The latest production of the Clare Amateur Dramatic Society "See How they Run" staged in the Clare Town Hall, last Friday and Saturday nights, drew large crowds to both performances, about 350 on Friday and over 400 on Saturday. Although this play had been performed before by the Society it detracted nothing from their latest. In the leading roles Barbara Long as Penelope Toop and Jim Bywaters as Lance Corporal Clive Winton gave sparkling performances. Completely at ease they led the cast through a merry dance of capers and plots that kept the audiences well amused.

The rest of the cast supported the leading players very well, although at times some of the minor actors were stiff and somewhat stilted in their production, no doubt due to lack of experience. However with more experienced actors such as Errol Williams and the leads to help them they staged a creditable performance. The play all took place in the hall of the Vicarage at Mertoncum Middlewick and the excellent stage setting was no doubt the fruits of the long experience of the Society. As was pointed out by the Mayor of Clare, Mr. E. Newton Long, the Elizabethan Theatre Trust considered the appointments of the stage (which was not visible to the audience) are as good as any in the country in Australia.

Speaking after the performance the Mayor said the proceeds (approx. 190 pounds) will be divided equally with the stage improvements committee and the Clare and District Building Fund.

After the performance, supper for the cast, assistants and friends was held in the assembly room. A presentation was made to the producer, Mr. Arnold Lemon, by Jim Bywaters. A minute's silence was observed in memory of Mr. Ralph Stacy the former producer for the Society who had done sterling work for the group for many years. The play will be presented this Friday at Spalding, Miss Nan Slattery will take the part of Miss Skillon, having been unable to do so in Clare owing to a family bereavement. Mrs. Dorothy Mundy was understudy to Miss Slattery and took the part on both nights.

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**The following article is a contribution from Rebecca Bolton who is sharing her Family History search with us and the connection with Clare.**

I thought my only connection to Clare was that my maternal grandfather, Alan Gaskell, had lived there in his late teens. I believe he worked for Farmers Union before enlisting for the RAAF. His name is on the honour board in the Clare Town Hall. However, only a few years ago, upon investigating Alan's family history, I discovered a greater family connection to the region, one I'm sure Alan would have known nothing about.

My parents were looking at the Terowie School registers (held at State Records) where Alan had been educated for a few years after he had been orphaned and lived with his Uncle Paddy. Paddy was a mystery to our family; I never heard my grandfather talk about his family and I never asked. However, a search through the registers unveiled the mysterious Paddy, his name was Oliver Leonard Sims.

A simple Google search of Oliver Sims led me directly to his war service records. Paddy had served as a stretcher bearer in WW1 and had earned two Military Medals. Despite Paddy's harrowing yet distinguished war experience, his story was lost within a generation.

This intriguing family mystery has led me on a journey of discovery. Further research into my grandfather's ancestry has uncovered his maternal line as being among the early Cornish immigrants to settle in the Clare Valley. My 3x great grandparents (surname Cotton) arrived in 1865. Soon after, eight children were born in the region, two buried in Penwortham cemetery as infants, victims of diphtheria. Birth and death records held at the Clare Regional History Group archives have been helpful in revealing specific details. Trove articles expose the Cotton narrative as quite bleak - poverty, alcoholism and domestic violence. Quite shocking, but probably not uncommon for the time.

The singular revelation of Oliver Sims has brought about my passion for family history. I have since completed a Diploma of Family History through the University of Tasmania which I thoroughly enjoyed and am now an active member of my local history group in Angaston. My maternal grandmother grew up in Angaston and this connection has allowed me to access many photographs and stories that relate to her family tree that I would not otherwise have had. I encourage all family history enthusiasts to contact local groups, there is so much information that can add both specifics and context to your own story.

**BUSHFIRES HAVE BEEN PART OF OUR LIFE IN THE MID NORTH SINCE EARLIEST SETTLEMENT. THIS ACCOUNT FROM THE NORTHERN ARGUS IN DECEMBER 1948 RECORDS DETAILS OF ONE SUCH EVENT.**

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND NIGHT FIRE AT GILLENTOWN AREA.**

**LUCKY SAVE FOR VILLAGE OF SEVENHILL.**

About 20 acres of thick scrub and grasslands were burned, the fire starting in the creek near Gillentown on Saturday afternoon Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>. The alarm was given in Clare about 3.20pm. and the Clare and District Fire Fighting trailer pump unit and team, plus the Clare Corporation unit and teams plus numerous fire fighting controllers and truck and tank teams were soon on the job, one coming from as far away as Skilly under the direction of Mr. Washington Parker.

The area mostly burned was on the property of Mr. Alex L. Knappstein and behind Reynold's property. Luckily the undergrowth was somewhat green, for on a very hot summer's day the fire would have gone close to wiping out the village of Sevenhill. As it was the fire was stopped more than a mile from Sevenhill outskirts.

Several minor casualties were reported. Mr. Geo. Neville energetic leader of the Clare District Council Trailer Pump unit had a foot crushed when the wheel of the vehicle and tank of water rolled over his foot. On Monday he was treated at Clare Hospital but is able to get about. Young Terence Tilbrook of the same trailer pump unit ended up wet through late at night after fighting all the afternoon and on Sunday had to receive Doctor's attention for bleeding ears. Having a temperature it is thought the cold wind at night plus the heat of the flames earlier, he must have caught a chill. He has been confined to bed for a few days.

Mr. J.B. Stephenson punctured one of the tyres of his truck.

Mr. Arthur Stopp one of the District Council trailer pump crew fought with a severe boil on his neck and was exempted from his employment on Monday when he had it lanced.

Mr. T.J. Sellars, Clare and District Chief Fire Controller said on Monday that the girls of Clare Telephone Exchange did a splendid job. Miss O'Connell was on duty at the time and Miss Jean Maynard as soon as she heard the alarm volunteered straight away for duty. The co-operation of the Exchange was really commendable ended Mr. Sellars, although it would be wise if in future people ceased calling the exchange as soon as they heard the siren. The girls had their instructions and calls to make to Fire Controllers in liaison with the Fire Control Office and endless calls only held up vital lines. Mr. Sellars who was out till late at night with various teams putting out smouldering stumps, said when trucks returned it would be best to empty them on doubtful stumps instead of carting the water home again. It is reported Mr. Pawelski had a crop of several acres in extent destroyed by the flames. The origin of the fire is stated to have occurred in the Gillentown Creek. Here it is very steep and difficult country with heavy timber, scrub and undergrowth and the trucks and firefighters did a magnificent job. Sgt. E.J. Williams is making special enquiries into the origin of the fire.

## BOOKS & CDs FOR SALE

ASHBY, Marj **CARINYA 1956 - 1989 A Peaceful and happy home**, (1989) CWA of SA Clare Branch, Clare, SA \$5

AUSTIN, Nigel **BOB ROWE – the great cattle trader** (2014) \$50

BELLMAN, Elinor A. (1995), **SADDLEWORTH - Hub of the Wheel**, (1995) Saddleworth, SA \$35

BOND, David **CLARE SHOW “A fine all round display” for 150 years** (2014) Clare SA \$33

Brinkworth Centenary Book Committee, **MAGPIE CREEK JUNCTION - a history of Brinkworth and district 1892 – 1992**, Brinkworth, SA. Recently reprinted. \$50

**THE CIVIC RECORD 1836 – 1986**, Wakefield Press 695pp. \$50

CROSS, Jack, **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**, (2016) Printak Pty Ltd, Adelaide, SA. 145 pages, illustrations, maps, portraits, facsimiles \$30

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

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

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

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

Johnson, Winifred N.

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

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

**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

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

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

**A HISTORY OF NGADJURI LODGE TRUST** (2010) \$10

**JUST AS IT WAS** (2010) The story of Win's life with humour and affection. 96pp including photos. \$20

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

### CD-ROMS

**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) \$5

### CARDS FOR SALE

Local images on a blank card for your personal message \$3

LALLY, Gerald A.

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

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

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

**TWO CHURCHES – Catholic faithful of the Clare Valley** (2019) \$50

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

LINN, Rob, **The story of Bungaree Station** (2011) (illus) \$17

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

NOYE, Robert J. **TALKING HISTORY – Tales of Clare SA** 50 articles published weekly in *The Northern Argus* (2003) \$15

PATTULLO, William

**THE LAND HISTORY OF POLISH HILL RIVER 1842 - 1990**

(1991) Details the ownership history of 120 sections of land in Polish Hill River, to the edge of Mintaro township. \$25

**THE OWNERS OF STANLEY FLAT 1836 – 1986** reprinted 2015 \$30

SCHMAAL, Jean

**THE INCHQUIN STORY**, Clare & District Branch, National Trust, (c1986) Clare SA \$5

**A QUIANT COURTHOUSE** (1987) Clare & District Branch, National Trust, Clare SA \$5

SEMPLE, Carolyn **“TO THE BEAT OF A DRUM” – Gum Creek School 1898 – 1957** (2018) \$20

SIMONS, J.J. ‘Boss’ **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, EHH ‘Clarion’ and TILBROOK, M, **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, **Ngadjuri – Aboriginal people of the Mid North region of South Australia**, (2005) Meadows SA, SASOSE Council Inc \$40

WILSON, John

**Bob's railway – turbulent political times in SA & a remarkable railroading dog**, (2019) \$78

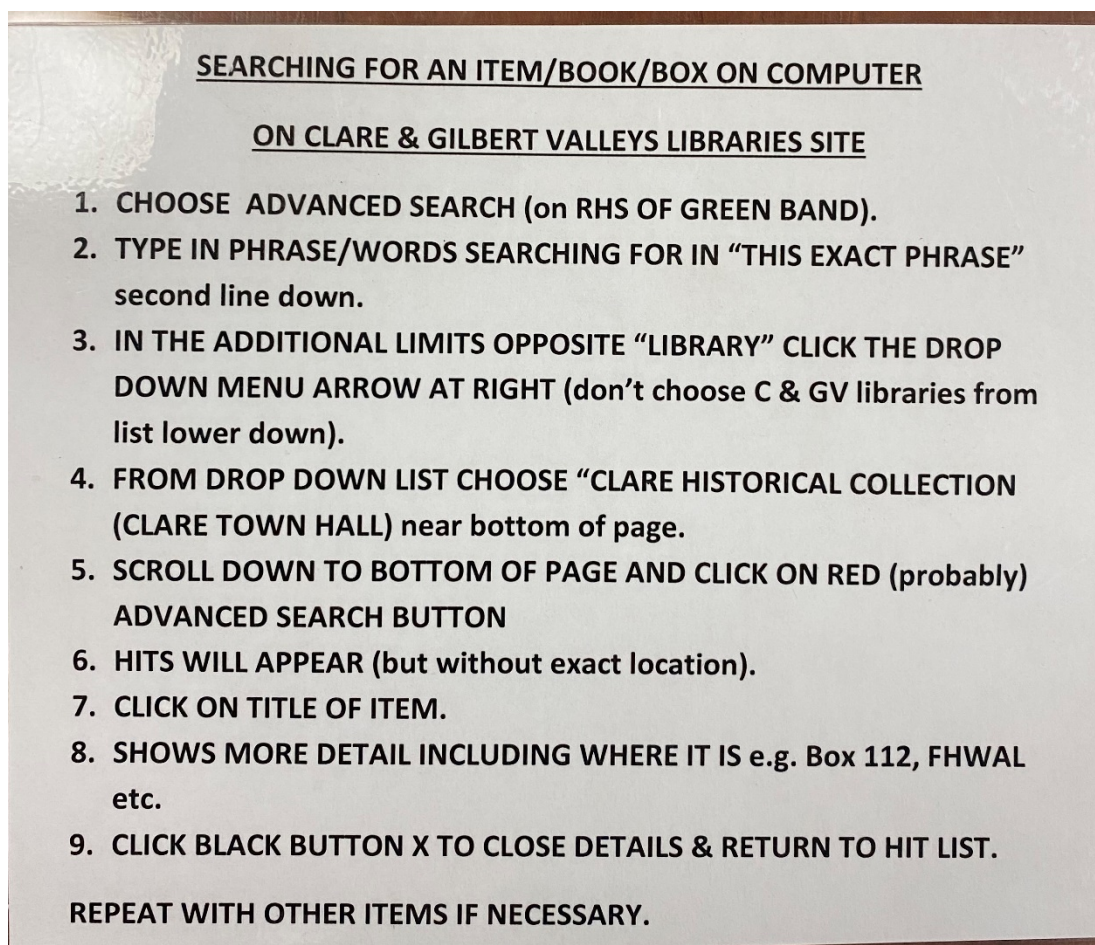
**The Riesling railway** (2018) Photographs, illustrations, maps, drawings, USB \$110



## USING THE ONE CARD CATALOGUE

Most of the items in the History Collection have been catalogued onto the OneCard system used by all public libraries in South Australia. This includes all of our books, box files, CDs and DVDs. The only difference is that ours is a closed collection – items can only be accessed within the Collection Room. At this stage we only catalogue hard copy items, not digital.

It is worthwhile to check for content before you visit. Below is a guide to using the catalogue. Follow the instructions carefully, and you will soon become proficient. The key is finding the item's call number, when you click on the title of the item. In the example below, **Box** refers to a box file, **FH** to a book about a family name. The box files contain material that is unstructured – minute books, memorabilia and all sorts of ephemera.



**SEARCHING FOR AN ITEM/BOOK/BOX ON COMPUTER**

**ON CLARE & GILBERT VALLEYS LIBRARIES SITE**

1. CHOOSE ADVANCED SEARCH (on RHS OF GREEN BAND).
2. TYPE IN PHRASE/WORDS SEARCHING FOR IN "THIS EXACT PHRASE" second line down.
3. IN THE ADDITIONAL LIMITS OPPOSITE "LIBRARY" CLICK THE DROP DOWN MENU ARROW AT RIGHT (don't choose C & GV libraries from list lower down).
4. FROM DROP DOWN LIST CHOOSE "CLARE HISTORICAL COLLECTION (CLARE TOWN HALL) near bottom of page.
5. SCROLL DOWN TO BOTTOM OF PAGE AND CLICK ON RED (probably) ADVANCED SEARCH BUTTON
6. HITS WILL APPEAR (but without exact location).
7. CLICK ON TITLE OF ITEM.
8. SHOWS MORE DETAIL INCLUDING WHERE IT IS e.g. Box 112, FHWAL etc.
9. CLICK BLACK BUTTON X TO CLOSE DETAILS & RETURN TO HIT LIST.

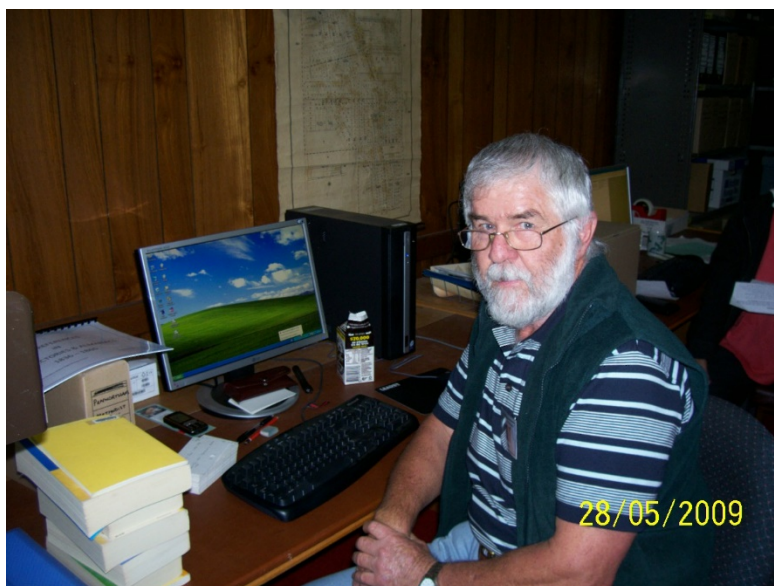
**REPEAT WITH OTHER ITEMS IF NECESSARY.**

The cataloguing of our collection began with Bookmark back in the 1990s and has updated with each change in the Public Library system. The bulk of work, particularly checking, was carried out by the late Bill O'Malley over the years he served as a volunteer. The above Search information was developed by Bill. We miss him – and his attention to detail. Alison Butler took over the reins from Bill for some time. Her contribution was greatly appreciated.

These days our cataloguing is assisted by library staff. The standard is very high as all the professional cataloguers in the State have to be happy about the quality of our entries.

**RIGHT: Bill O'Malley at work at his cataloguer's desk back in 2009.**

Bill was a great researcher and one of his many contributions to our collection is a detailed history of their home in Albert Street. This excellent work would serve as a useful guide to anyone interested in house and land history.



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## RECENT HAPPENINGS

- On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June, four staff from State Records SA visited our Collection to remove the original births, deaths and marriages volumes and indexes for the District of Clare. These dated from 1857 to about 1990 and there are 145 volumes. Some of these were photographed prior to removal. Through the work of Allison Tilbook over many years, all the indexes had been replaced by more accurate and comprehensive listings which remain on our shelves in the CLARE section.
- Also in June, David and Alison O'Loughlin visited the collection during the Saturday Village Market. They were delighted to view the town hall and our display about architect Chris A. Smith. David & Alison own Chris Smith's home and studio on Prospect Road. David is Mayor of the City of Prospect and is also President of the South Australian Chapter of the Art Deco and Modernism Society of Australia. David made some very constructive comments about making the building more relevant and he shared these with our Mayor Wayne Thomas during the Main Street Conference, held in the Clare Town Hall in the following days.
- The re-printing of RJ 'Bob' Noye's ***Clare a district history*** is underway. It will be published in soft cover and contains an additional seven chapters, covering the years from 1975 to 2010. The writing and sourcing of photos of this section was undertaken by Sue Wurst. This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> re-print of the book, with a total of 4,000 copies sold. Start planning now for those you know who would love it for their Christmas present! It will be available by October/ November.
- Our webmaster, Jon Ruwolt, is continuing to add material to our website. Please check it out – an excellent activity during lock-down.  
<https://www.clarehistory.com>
- Over the coming months our computers will all be assessed and updated.