



MEDIA RELEASE

18th May 2015

PS MARION TO JOIN LOCK 1 FOUNDATION STONE CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT BLANCHETOWN

100 years ago the PS Marion was chosen to convey the official party to the Lock 1 site at Blanchetown for the laying of the foundation stone by His Excellency the Governor of South Australia, Sir Henry Galway, K.C.M.G., D.S.O. and in 2015, the Marion is making her way back for the centenary celebrations of this auspicious occasion on Friday June 5th 2015 at 11.00 a.m. to join a re-enactment ceremony and public luncheon event presented by SA Water.

It was stated 'An Army of Parliamentarians' attended this grand occasion on the 5th June 1915 including the Prime Minister, The Right Hon. Andrew Fisher P.C., the Premier of South Australia, the Hon. Crawford Vaughan MP, the Federal Attorney-General the Hon W M Hughes, the Premier of New South Wales, W A Holman and the Minister of Industry the Hon. R.P. Blundell to name a few.

Parliamentary representatives arrived at Goolwa on the 29th May 1915 to attend a civic reception and then made their way on board the PS Marion to depart on 30th May where they were shown developments along the banks on the way. The Chief Engineer of Gem Navigation Company, Mr Fuller, specially fitted out the Marion for the occasion and there were 120 passengers including crew with the official party including the Governor of South Australia, Sir Henry Galway boarding in Murray Bridge after travelling by rail from Adelaide.

The Advertiser, 7th June 1915 reported, "History was made at Blanchetown on Saturday by the ceremonial inauguration of work in connection with the first attempt made to harness and control the waters of the River Murray. "

"The William R. Randell lock will be the first link in this wonderful chain that is calculated to revolutionize the development of large tracts of southern and eastern Australia. Named worthily in memory of one of the pioneers of the River Murray trade, the lock at Blanchetown will mark the initial step toward the fulfillment of South Australia's part in the national scheme."

The voyage from Goolwa was described as a 'A Delightful Outing' and the Advertiser further reported, "The trip proved delightful from start to finish. All on board were pleased with the appointments of the Marion, from whose upper decks they watched the winding panorama on the banks of the great waterway. To those who had never travelled on the Murray before the outing was an eye opener."

"The weather conditions were perfect, and the placidity of the voyage, with its opportunities for basking in sunshine and breathing the bracing fresh air, acted like a tonic upon the city dwellers."

Captain Smith capably navigated the Marion to the lock site at Blanchetown all those years ago to be greeted with school children with flags lining the riverbank and was reported as, "A gay scene presented itself on the western bank, which was crowded with people from Renmark, Morgan, Waikerie, Mannum, Angaston, Truro, and Blanchetown. Flags were flown in abundance. At the start of the proceedings the assembled school children sang "Rule Britannia" and "God Save the King."

The re-enactment on Friday June 5th will relive this momentous occasion in river and our State's history that attracted national interest and we are proud the Marion played such a vital role.

Mayor Dave Burgess of the Mid Murray Council is extremely excited to be stepping back into the history books when the Marion was involved in cementing Murray River history on a national level and said, "I feel very privileged to be taking part in this re-enactment and joining the community of Blanchetown for this official function to commemorate the commencement of such a ground-breaking and innovative project with the building of the first lock on the Murray River".

Once again the Marion will have dignitaries boarding prior to her arrival in Blanchetown and in the lead up, the Marion will be offering a 3 day cruise departing Mannum on the 3rd June to arrive as she did 100 years ago on the 5th June in readiness for the public celebrations and official commemoration ceremony/luncheon at Lock 1.

A short cruise will also be offered from Blanchetown on the 5th June departing at 1.30 p.m. and will depart for the first time ever, right in the heart of Lock 1.

To commemorate this milestone, a 4 hour dinner cruise to Swan Reach will be offered departing at 3.30 p.m. along with a non stop overnight cruise back to Mannum.

For further information on the PS Marion cruises to Blanchetown and return in association with the Lock 1 Foundation Stone Centenary Celebrations, please visit www.psmarion.com or contact the Mannum Dock Museum on 85692733.

Please contact Deb Alexander, Executive Officer of the Mannum Dock Museum if you require media information or interviews on 0414857738.

