



RAIL TRAIL - May 6th 2012

Sunday May 6th

7 vehicles travelled the route, Quenton our leader, Marie, John and Jane, Max and Lyn, Roy and Bronwyn, Keryn and Brent, Norma, and Barbara. It started out with pleasant weather and although it came in very cold as the day moved on, fortunately the rain held off until our trip home.



the rain held off until our trip home.

The group met at Gawler Station and travelled to Burra via small railway towns. In the past these towns were bustling metropolises with trains being the main means of transport for their every need, from passengers to livestock & freight, to merchandise (for mining), to agriculture and personal items.

We discovered that several of the stations were designed exactly the

same, while other stations like Gawler, Riverton and Burra, had very elaborate buildings.

Water towers, ground water storage tanks, freight cranes and goods sheds were all designed the same, using local stone and beautiful timbers not seen in modern buildings of today. A couple of palm trees also featured at each station and numerous pepper trees have stood the test of time. All structures had fine detail and included magnificent doors, verandah posts, vents, bay windows, scalloped eaves and spacious rooms. Sadly most have been removed or been left in a state of disrepair leaving only memories of a very significant era in our past.

We drove by Roseworthy then Wasleys, Hamley Bridge, Stockport, Tarlee and stopped at Riverton for morning tea. The Riverton station is now a beautifully restored private dwelling. On to Saddleworth, then back roads to Manoora and Merildin. We had lunch at a shelter in the heart of Farrell Flat. It was a replica of a shearing shed, displaying items used in a shearing shed and photos depicting the history of the area. Although quite chilly now, hot toasted sandwiches and baked apple, custard and cream warmed us from the inside. The chilli on Max and Lyn's lunch kept them warm.

We then travelled to Burra. It was very fortunate that the station was open for inspection and guided tours of the ongoing renovations to this magnificent old building which was in a derelict condition just twelve months ago. With Government funding and a hard working group of volunteers they have made significant progress yet they still have a long way to go.



Displayed photos, old advertisements and timetables gave us some indication of what life might have been like in days gone by. Much of the timber work had been destroyed by white ants.

Good progress has been made with the installation of a new roof, ceiling and floors and ablutions. The building housed the ticket office, refreshment room, kitchen /serving area and other utility rooms.



RAIL TRAIL - May 6th 2012



Apparently people travelling further west or east only had 5 minutes to have a cup of tea at the Burra stop as passengers could not get off the train due to so many onlookers crowding onto platform. A picket fence was built so that they could disembark quickly and safely.

Those that paid threepence had a better viewing place (I find it hard to imagine the intense curiosity to see the steam trains huffing and puffing their way into the station.)

We finished a wonderful day with hot coffee, scones with jam and cream before making our way home.



Thank you Quenton for organizing this trip!

[By Keryn Wilkins]