



HISTORY ROOM

NEWS



July 2017

by Dawn Juers

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Last week we had an interesting day when some of the Production crew for the remake of Storm Boy came into the History Room to research what we had on Goolwa and surrounds that would be of interest to them with their project. We had a pleasant time chatting to them and answering any questions they had.

We were appreciative of their compliments on the records we have accumulated and their surprise that such a small town had such a facility. We wish them success on their Storm Boy project.

THE GROUNDING OF THE TUG MOREE



During heavy winter weather which blanketed the whole of the coastline of South Australia, the brand new tug 'Moree' of 55tons and valued at £35,000 was making her delivery voyage from Sydney to Whyalla on 8th July, 1961 (56 years ago).

Heavy squalls and high seas lashed the 'Moree' making progress slow across Encounter Bay. Around midnight the drama of the 'Moree' began – the crew were sailing past the Coorong when the next thing they knew they were going through waves 15-20ft high. They went aground on the Coorong beach twelve miles east of the Murray Mouth. She had suffered minor damage but was now open to the pounding of the ocean surf.

The radio operator could only contact a Melbourne radio station who telephoned Adelaide Police Headquarters. Television flashes brought news to the local viewers who were asked to look for flares along the coast. Victor Harbor police received 3 reports of sighting and established the location of the wreck. Land searches were organised with 40 men divided into several parties. Early the next morning the stranded tug and crew of five men were found safe on the beach. In 2008, Bill Neaylon told Geoffrey Byrnes the story of his involvement with the 'Moree'. *"Efforts had been made to refloat the boat out through the surf, one of which involved using a tug. To get a line out, two tall posts were planted on top of the dune and a rope was suspended between them parallel to the beach. An aeroplane swooped down, hooked the line and deposited it on the waiting boat out beyond the waves"*.

This did not move the 'Moree', which had dug its own hole in the sand. Large bomber type wheels were welded onto the hull and the 'Moree' was towed by tractor up to the mouth and refloated at a point near where the shacks are at Barkers Knoll. Hector Semaschko in the Fairy Queen then towed it to Goolwa where a small diesel engine was installed and an attempt was made to negotiate the Mouth, which failed. The 'Moree' was taken back to Goolwa again, where all the superstructure was removed and the hull trucked to Adelaide. After an incredible five months of salvage attempts, the 'Moree' was finally re-launched at Port Adelaide in January 1962.

Last heard, the 'Moree's home port was Whyalla.

CAN YOU HELP US?

Our copy of the Biographical Index of South Australians 1836 – 1885 Volume 4 (Surnames S-Z) has gone missing and we are keen to reunite it with the other volumes to make it available again to other researchers.

If you happened to have accidentally taken this home with your research materials, would you please return it to the Goolwa History Room.



We are pleased to announce that a digital version has been made available for customers to search on the Local History Room PC at both Goolwa and Strathalbyn.

Happy Researching,

Dawn

Help is available in the History Room when a volunteer is on duty. If you are travelling some distance it may be advisable to phone the Library on 8555-7000 to ascertain whether a volunteer is available. For comments, suggestions or to receive this newsletter email history.goolwa11@gmail.com

Back copies of this newsletter can be sourced on our wiki - <http://alexhistory.pbworks.com>