



# **LONGFORD RAILWAY BRIDGE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER MAY 2019**

Welcome to the first newsletter of the committee pulling together the ideas for the celebration of the Sesquicentenary of the Iron Railway Bridge in Longford.

So far we have established a committee and have held two meetings in February and April this year. A lot of interest has been shown in the community already by Tasrail and local historians. So the committee is starting to formulate some ideas and collect items of interest.

## **In the beginning....**

“10<sup>th</sup> February 1871 saw the opening of Tasmania’s first railway. Our signature iron bridge came into its own as a remarkable example of contemporary engineering. It was the longest span of any bridge in Australia – until it was surpassed in 1880 by a new bridge at Rockhampton.

The bridge with two spans of 200 feet (61M) was manufactured in England to the designs supplied by Doyne, Major & Willett (Launceston Engineers) and shipped out in kit form predrilled for riveting on site.

In 1971 we celebrated its one-hundredth year of service and it seems more than appropriate that we should celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.

William Doyne said in 1868 “A railway is a sweet, which having once tasted we seek for evermore.” Can you imagine the joy of seeing a steam train in Longford once again?

The Launceston Western Railway serviced twelve stations running out of Launceston to St. Leonards, Breadalbane, Evandale Road, Perth, Longford, Bishopsbourne, Oaks, Glenmore, Hagley, Westbury, Exton and Deloraine.

First Class from Launceston to Deloraine cost 9 shilling and six pence and 14/3d return. Second Class 6/3d single and 9/6d return.”

The committee consists of a number of local experts:

Chair: Councillor Dick Adams, historians Nigel, Burch, Len Langan, Bob Pitt; Tasrail representative, Gilbert Ness, Rodney Cuthbert, Engineer; Tradesman John Stebbings; Gayle McLucas, Artist and costumiere. Secretary to Committee Lucie Copas, Northern Midlands Council.

In the first sets of minutes, some of the ideas were put forward. These included:

- Exhibitions and displays
- Series of articles talking about the bridge history and events it witnessed.
- Involvement of local schools
- Re-enactment steam train to cross the bridge on its anniversary.
- Lighting up the bridge.
- Involved railway enthusiasts around the north, including Light rail group
- Family weekend
- Children's activities including Thomas the Tank Engine

Discussion on having a stall at Longford Show and also inquiries are being made on the reinstatement of the railway pillars in replicated material.

All committee members will be seeking other ideas and materials through the ongoing meetings.

If anyone has any artifacts, diaries or local information you would like to share with the Committee, please contact the

**Chairman, Dick Adams on 0418132828 or [dick.g.adams@gmail.com](mailto:dick.g.adams@gmail.com)**

