



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012

### **SA's YOUNGEST HERITAGE VESSEL ENGINEER's, FIRST CRUISE**

This weekend, Eric Wolverson, the youngest volunteer to take on the role as Chief Engineer on a heritage vessel in South Australia will take the paddle steamer "Marion" out for the first time.

Eric was born in 1986 and early in life showed an aptitude towards things mechanical, his parents being partners in a firm in Victoria specializing in the restoration of steam traction engines and paddle boat engines.

His first own engine was a small portable unit built in 1903, he was only 5 years of age! He also became the owner of a 1926 Aveling and Porter steam roller at the age of 13 years which he exhibits at various events in Victoria during the year.

His first association with paddle steamers was at the recommissioning of the PS Marion in 1994 and since then has worked on this boat and others as a dedicated volunteer, including the PS Oscar W and PS Ruby.

He was Apprentice Board Adviser with the Engineering Employers Association SA Group Training Scheme for over 2 years during his apprenticeship and was a runner up in the State Apprentice of the Year (SA) Award in 2006.

He gained his Steam Ticket with Worksafe at the age of 19.

Eric concluded his apprenticeship with firm, AGI in 2006 where he is currently employed as a Leading Hand Maintenance Fitter.

Late last year Eric successfully passed his exams with the SA Transport Department and is now a qualified Marine Engine Driver (Steam). As far as can be ascertained he is the youngest Engineer to operate the PS Marion and heritage vessels in South Australia. The oldest retired in the early 1940's in his mid eighties.

Eric's late father was the last and youngest person to get his Marine Engine Drivers Certificate at the age of 18. This was in 1980 when the Commonwealth had control of inland waters.

He is currently engaged in assisting in the restoration of a 1916 model Steam Wagon, this has involved extensive boiler and engine repairs.

Eric will be crewing in his new role as Engineer on the PS Marion where short cruises will be steaming for Easter on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> of April.

Eric enthused, *"I have been working towards becoming an Engineer on the Marion since I first set foot on the deck 18 years ago and I am excited and looking forward to my first trip as Engineer"*.

John Norris, legend River Boat Engineer stated, *"Eric is a quiet young achiever and I am very proud of him"*.

*"In a world of old traditions it is encouraging to see youngsters like Eric, who already owns his own steam roller and a separate steam engine, keen to gain the knowledge that will ensure that remaining paddle steamers and steam trains can continue to operate in the future"*, said Chairman Rob Bowring.

*"Eric's knowledge is incredible for his young age. I remember him coming on the boat at 8 and at the age of 12 was the most competent operator of the steam winch on the Marion. He is truly amazing with his understanding of steam"*.

*"The old skills required are dying out with the passing of the masters who have kept them alive and younger volunteers like Eric are the hope for the future, the continuance of the traditional old trades that will keep PS Marion, and other similar vessels, plying the Murray, something she has been doing for over 100 years."*

The PS Marion will be cruising this weekend:

- One hour short cruises 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> April departing at 10:30 am, 12:00 noon, 1:30 pm and 3:00 pm from Mannum town Wharf.
- Devonshire Tea and bar facilities available, no BYO.
- \$15 Adults and \$7.50 Children.

For those who wish to take advantage of an overnight journey on board the historic heritage boat Marion a 5 day 4 night cruise is scheduled from Mannum to Swan Reach and return in May.

- Depart Mannum Monday 7<sup>th</sup> of May and return Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May
- \$799 per person twin share.
- All meals and off shore activities included.
- As we cruise guest speakers will entertain each day with historic themed stories.

Short cruises will also be running on 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> of June. Other extended cruises scheduled later in the year include:

- Mildura to Renmark Cruise - (5 days 4 nights)
  - Depart Mildura Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September and arrive in Renmark Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> of September.

- \$999 per person twin share.
- All meals and off shore activities included.
  
- Berri to Mannum Cruise - (8 days 7 nights)
  - Depart Berri Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October and arrive in Mannum Friday 26<sup>th</sup> of October.
  - \$1199 per person twin share.
  - All meals and off shore activities included.
  
- PS Marion Christmas Lunch Cruise (5 hour lunch cruise)
  - Depart 11:00 from Mary Ann reserve and return 4:00.
  - Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> & Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Includes buffet lunch and afternoon tea
  - \$85.00 per person
  - Bar facilities available, no BYO

*(All itineraries and arrival / departure dates and times are subject to change at any time dependant on river conditions and at the discretion of the Captain).*

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**For media information contact Deb Alexander on 0414 857738 or for further cruise information contact Jenny Callander at the Mannum Dock Museum on 85692733 or [museum@psmarion.com](mailto:museum@psmarion.com) Short cruise bookings available on line or contact 85691303 or 0419765090**

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