

What a Gem

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Mr Harvey, spoke about the Gem's history from the paddle-steamer's birth in Moama in 1876 to when it was upgraded for passenger service in Goolwa in 1882 where she was hand-sawn in half and pulled apart to allow an extra section to be fitted.

Throughout her working life, The Gem transported both cargo and passengers along the Murray before The Pioneer Settlement purchased the steamer in 1962, and she made the eight-month voyage to her new home.

Mr Harvey shared a personal memory of when he proposed to his now wife of 30 years on the deck of the Gem before sharing more restoration plans.

"We will continue to work towards restoring her to preserve her so she can survive another 150 years," he said.

Before closing the speeches, Cr King wished the Gem a happy birthday and reflected on its role as a well-known tourist attraction in Swan Hill.

"This boat is an absolute icon of Swan Hill. When you think of Swan Hill, you think of the Gem."



Locals, Pioneer Settlement volunteers and council staff were among the guests attending the celebration. Pictures: Louis Harrison



There was a great turnout for the Gem's birthday.



Mayor Stuart King opened the celebration.



Pioneer Settlement volunteer Dot Harvey was among those attending the milestone.



The Gem has undergone restoration in preparation for her big day.



Restorer Brendan Harvey spoke about his long-standing affiliation with the paddle steamer.



Ian Boys, Laurel Boys and Teresa O'Brien enjoyed the celebration.

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