



## Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc.

PO Box 2736, Port Lincoln SA 5606

# NEWSLETTER

*September 2016*

## HEAVY WORK AT FREIGHT SHED

Museum members have been undertaking two major projects in recent months. For years now, pigeons have been a big problem along the covered siding housing rollingstock displays. Don Atkinson has tried various approaches to deter them, with limited success.

The latest effort has seen large nets (recycled from the fishing industry) installed at each end of the covered siding. The installation of these nets at the eastern end was almost impossible using just ladders. At the time, GWA contractors were working on

the station building and had a large cherry-picker machine on site. We were fortunate to get permission to borrow it one Saturday, and two of John McGeever's sons with the appropriate qualifications 'volunteered' their time to help us out, installing the netting.

Our members have also installed netting at the western end of the siding. It appears that some pigeons are still getting in by devious means, so the battle hasn't yet been won. Don still has a couple of tricks to deploy, so hopefully we will be able to report success in a later Newsletter.



*Christopher and Shaun McGeever put their specialist skills to good use installing a large net across the eastern gate to the freight shed, as part of our ongoing battle to keep pigeons out. Several committee members kept a close eye on proceedings.*

Peter Knife

## Heavy Work at Freight Shed

The other major effort at the freight shed is still ongoing, and involves the retaining wall around the pad on which the freight shed is erected.

For some time now deterioration of the wooden sleepers used in the retaining wall has been getting worse. Some of the sleepers broke, potentially allowing the fill behind the wall to spill out. Murray Wright began installing spare steel sleepers in front of the wooden ones, to strengthen the wall.

Earlier this year a routine inspection of the premises by GWA revealed the presence of termites. As owners of the structure, GWA decided that all of the wooden sleepers would eventually have to be removed from the retaining wall and replaced with steel ones. They have supplied a quantity of steel sleepers to assist.

For the last couple of months working bees have been held. Murray has been

assisted by Don Atkinson, Trevor Hoskin, John McGeever and Bob Prout. Unfortunately it's not just a case of dropping the steel sleepers in place. They need to be oxy-cut to fit, and then welded to secure them in place.



*Above: The original retaining wall structure, using second-hand wooden sleepers.*

*Below: Work in progress on the rebuilt wall.*

Peter Knife



## FRESH LOOK FOR STATION BUILDING

The roof of Port Lincoln's lovely stone station building has been leaking for some time, threatening to damage the structure. Over the last few months GWA have engaged contractors to re-roof the building and to repaint all external woodwork and metalwork.

As the building is heritage listed, approval for the work from the Heritage Council was needed. The approval included using specific colours, and returning the external details such as downpipes as closely as possible

to their original state. The most obvious difference is the adoption of 'Heritage Red' for the roof and much of the trim.

The end result is a building which is not only waterproof, but now presents a stunning face – the red is a huge improvement on the AN-era yellowish colour!

We congratulate GWA on undertaking the work. The building is now in pristine condition, ideally timed for its 90th anniversary early next year.



*Above: Initial work saw the veranda roofing replaced.*

*Left: All roofing was renewed and all external wood and metalwork was repaired (if needed) and repainted.*

*Below: The final result. Superb!*

Peter Knife



## TRAIN FROM LOCK TO PORT LINCOLN – 1920s

*This story was written by the late Violet Irene Grace Berryman (later Lear, then Solly). It describes a journey she made by train which didn't quite work out as anticipated. Thanks to Sue Olsen for this very interesting piece.*

Late in the year 1927 I took a job as companion to a lady by the name of Mrs Christmas. Her husband was stationed at Lock in Central Eyre Peninsula. He was overseer of the water pipe line from the Tod Reservoir. His job was to check the pipe line for leaks or damage and necessitated his absence from home for several days, travelling by horse and buggy.

They had recently arrived from South Africa and Mrs Christmas had a mild heart complaint and was nervous of being left on her own, so I was offered the job of 'companion' which turned out to be 'maid of all work' as well.

The job was not without its 'perks', as sometimes Mr C would only have to be away one day in which case (weather permitting) we would accompany him in the cart, taking lunch and boiling the billy in true Aussie style – crossed green stick from the gum tree, on top of the billy to prevent the water from tasting smoky. I loved the outdoor trips.

Towards the end of summer in 1928, the district suffered one of the longest and most severe heat waves on record. For 10 days the temperature soared between 114 and 122 degrees Fahrenheit. Every day birds came in from the mallee scrub which surrounded the 4-roomed corrugated iron house in which we lived to drink the water we put out for them under the verandah. Some toppled over and died there.

Feeling low after the long hot spell I began to suffer from tooth ache and when the summer ended with a severe thunder storm and rain I decided to go to Port Lincoln for dental treatment. I boarded the train in early afternoon. It was due in Port Lincoln at 6pm in time for the mail to go aboard the Motor Vessel *Minnipa* which left Port Lincoln for Port Adelaide at 7pm.

The train consisted of engine, guards van, 13 freight trucks, 1 passenger carriage and brake van. Near Warrachie siding we struck trouble. The line was built on a high embankment of red clay which had been softened by the heavy rain causing the sleepers to sink and rails to spread. We felt a giant tug and the train stopped. Heads popped out from windows and what a sight we saw. The engine and guards van were still on the line as were our carriage and the brake van. In between the thirteen freight trucks hung suspended over the side of the embankment like a giant necklace.

We couldn't believe our luck when we saw how close our carriage had come to derailment. We all clambered out on to the wet clay and cameras began to click. Then we noticed the guard shinning up the nearest telephone pole with a portable phone. When he came down he started counting the passengers. 'Why are you counting us' I asked, feeling like one of a load of sheep. Port Lincoln wants to know if it's worthwhile sending a relief train was his reply. After another conversation on the portable phone he announced that a relief train was on its way from Cummins. With the help of the passengers everything was unloaded from the brake van (including mail and our luggage) and piled up in the mud awaiting the relief train.

A woman with 5 children had been travelling since early morning and had no food left. The little ones began to cry and say they were hungry. Among the passengers, on the first leg of his trip to England was Mr Malby, store keeper and Postmaster from Pygery. He did a whip around among the passengers and collected food for the children. I remember handing over a packet of orange slice biscuits

## Train From Lock to Port Lincoln – 1920s

(bought from Mr Cliff Cabot at the Lock General Store). Others had sandwiches and cake which they willingly parted with for the kids. After a couple of hours the relief train arrived. Everyone cheered but were rather taken aback when it turned out to be an engine and a guards van. However the 14 passengers and our luggage were squeezed in like sardines and we set off. On reaching Cummins it was dark. Mr Malby and another passenger alighted and came back with hot pasties and buns and coffee for everyone. A very kind gesture I never forgot. We then continued on to Port Lincoln – leaving our coffee cups at Edillilie to be returned on the next train.

The remainder of the trip was very quiet as we were all tired and the children asleep on our laps.

I remembered my father telling me when he put me on the train to go to Lock that if I got tired of sitting in the train to get out and run ahead for a while and then sit down and wait for the train to catch up!

At last the lights of Port Lincoln showed up. I was feeling sorry for my poor Dad waiting in the cold for me with buggy and pair of ponies to drive the 12 miles home. I thought to myself it won't be long now when the guard called out:

Please keep your seats when we get to Port Lincoln as we will be going straight down the jetty where the *Minnipa* is waiting for the mail – she is already 2 hours late.

This took about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour. What tired but thankful people tumbled out on to the platform when at last we returned to the station. I climbed into the buggy for the 12 mile trip home.

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*From the Port Lincoln Times, 7 June 1929:*

<b>Passenger Train Derailed.</b>
<b>Accident Near Warrachie.</b>
<b>Minnipa Delayed Two Hours.</b>
<p>Owing to the derailment of the passenger train near Warrachie on Wednesday, the <i>Minnipa</i>, which was due to leave for Port Adelaide at 7 p.m., was delayed for two hours. The train had on board mails and 21 passengers for transfer to the <i>Minnipa</i>. After communication with Adelaide it was decided to delay the sailing of the motorship in order to take the mails aboard. When advice of the accident was received, a relief train was sent to the scene. The passengers and mails were transferred to the relief train, and brought to Port Lincoln. The train arrived here at 8.30 p.m. and the <i>Minnipa</i> sailed half-an-hour later. It is understood that the tender and several trucks and carriages were derailed. The train was being driven by Enginedriver Roberts at the time of the accident. Nobody was hurt. The extent of the damage is not yet known. A breakdown gang was sent to the scene of the accident on Wednesday, to replace the train on the rails. An official enquiry will probably be held.</p>



*This derailment 'near Tooligie' in the 1925-35 period bears a striking resemblance to the one experienced by Miss Berryman. The passenger carriage and brake van are still on the track, and goods wagons are scattered along the embankment. It is highly likely that it is actually the same derailment.*

Lance Blucher Collection, EPRPS Archives

## BOB PROUT'S MISHAPS

*Bob Prout was the last working Guard on Eyre Peninsula. He retired in 1995 after almost 40 years on Eyre Peninsula, and has a wealth of stories to tell. Here are some of his mishaps.*

The first one was when I was a guard on the Cummins train and we became uncoupled two trucks behind the engine and the brakevan stopped over a culvert. When I looked out the ground looked solid so I grabbed my hand lamp and jumped out, only to land in a creek full of water running fast. They had just put a pipe in the road alongside of the track. After I lost my hand lamp I grabbed the pipe and pulled myself out and ran up to the engine and asked the driver why they hadn't recoupled up. The fireman said he wasn't going to get wet, so I used the lamp on the engine and recoupled and rode on the engine to Cummins where a welcome shower and change of clothes was the order of the day.

The second incident happened when I left Port Lincoln going to Rudall. As we left the yard I went back to shut the rear door of the brakevan and as I walked back I heard the window break. A shot was fired from under the apron of the Cresco works and a car took off fast. The bullet missed me by about a foot and they never did catch the culprit.

The third happened when we left Kapinnie and I was giving 'second right' to the driver, Les Dudley. The only thing between us was a heap of trees and as I leant out one hit me and knocked me out of the brakevan. I lost my hat. When I recovered I ran back to Kapinnie to the wheat agent's house and his wife didn't even recognise me, but cleaned me up and her husband took me back to Yeelanna. Les saw me standing by the switches letting the train onto the main line and he asked me how I beat them there. The next day the gang found my hat, they said it was by the old whistle board. If I had fallen about two yards further on I would have been impaled on top of the post.

At the barracks the porter used to make up each bed with fresh linen each day but when you got to your room you always used to check what was under the blankets. Twice I have found a snake asleep either on top or under one of the blankets, so it was wise to check.

I have had many derailments but the shortest one was on the way home from Buckleboo in the Fageol railcar going from Nammuldi to Kimba. The Nammuldi Creek was flooded and as we came up to it I saw my driver George Ormsby was asleep so I did not wake him. I could see the rails and sleepers moving on the water but after we made it to the other side I woke him and told him to stop as we had one set of wheels of the trailer off the rails. I got two pieces of sleepers and canted them up to the rail and we pulled it on first go. We lost no time and I told the Train Controller that the creek was flooded. He asked how we got across and I told him, 'with luck'.



*Bob Prout in his natural habitat, keeping watch from a brakevan.*

Nic Doncaster

## FROM THE ARCHIVES - SHUNT HORSE CARDS

A visit to the State Archives earlier in the year turned up the original record cards for the SAR's shunt horses. The 41 cards related to Port Lincoln were scanned, and a printed copy of these is now available for browsing in the reading room. It was interesting to see that some of the horse's names were used for more than one horse over the years. Some of the cards are reproduced here.

*Champion* drowned off the jetty in 1942. This incident was described in the Newsletter for January 2015.

*Harvey* had a fairly routine history, having spent all ten of his working years at Port Lincoln.

*Trigger*, on the other hand, moved around from Balaklava to Bordertown and then Mile End before coming to Port Lincoln. He died just 8 months later.

S. A. R.	No.....
<b>HORSE CARD.</b>	
Name .....	<i>Champion</i>
Date of Purchase .....	
Description .....	<i>Brown gelding white blaze white near fore &amp; fore leg to below hock</i>
Age.....	<i>7</i>
Brands.....	
From whom Purchased.....	
Cost .....	<i>Valued £50</i>
Charged to.....	<i>Son</i>
Authority.....	<i>SAR 5096/33</i>
Station.....	<i>Port Lincoln</i>
Duty.....	<i>Shunting</i>
Transfer, Disposal, &c.....	<i>Drowned from jetty at Port Lincoln on 6/4/42 S.P.L. 20/42</i>
500 - 8.8.11	

S.A.R.	No.....
<b>HORSE CARD.</b>	
Name .....	<i>TRIGGER</i>
Date of Purchase .....	<i>October 1948.</i>
Description .....	<i>Necky Drought Bay Gelding blaze, white underlip, saddle &amp; poller mooch</i>
Age.....	<i>7 Years</i>
Brands.....	
From whom Purchased.....	<i>Fred Tann</i>
Cost .....	<i>£ 25/-</i>
Charged to.....	<i>Working</i>
Authority.....	<i>S.M.C. 26/10/48</i>
Station.....	<i>Balaklava</i>
Duty.....	<i>Shunting</i>
Transfer, Disposal, Etc.....	<i>to Bordertown 29/3/49 to Mile End to Port Lincoln 28/9/50</i>
Dead 6/9/51 1.P.L. 26/9/51	
500 - 7.17 8.8.14	

## PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

It is with pleasure that I present this report on the activities of the Society for 2015/16.

After several years with major efforts for History Month, we eased the load on our dedicated volunteers by not mounting a major display this year. However planning has begun for History Month 2017 when we will be celebrating the 90th anniversary of Port Lincoln's heritage-listed stone station building.

Coincidentally GWA are undertaking a major refurbishment of the station building. Roof leaks have been a problem for years, along with drainage issues, so the complete re-roofing and external repaint of the building is welcome. The contractors doing the work have been very cooperative in maintaining access for us to the museum's rooms most of the time, with little disruption to our normal opening days. With work almost complete, the building looks stunning, with the AN-era roof and trim colours replaced with heritage red.

During the year we were given access to another room in the station building, located between the reading room and the gallery/toilet. We are working towards setting it up as a mini-theatrette, and Bob Prout and John McGeever have done a great job getting it ready. Graham Ellis has very kindly donated a quantity of carpet squares which have been used in the new theatrette as well as in the Porters' room.

A routine inspection of the freight shed by GWA earlier this year highlighted the presence of termites in parts of the building. GWA have engaged pest control contractors for ongoing

attention, and the situation is currently under control. *See page 2 for details of the work being undertaken as a result of this.* Murray Wright has been assisted by Don Atkinson, Trevor Hoskin, John McGeever and Bob Prout, and these gentlemen have been making superhuman efforts well beyond their advancing years in getting the job done!

Don Atkinson has been waging an ongoing war with pigeons around the freight shed for several years. *See page 1 for more details of the latest efforts to tackle the problem.*

Des Wiseman has been a valuable addition to the Committee, livening up our meetings, taking turns opening the museum and assisting with projects at the freight shed. Maggie Knife has done a sterling job keeping us in line financially. And to the whole Committee, your support and participation has been outstanding. Thank you all!

Peter Knife

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*Here is a sneak preview of the new room, with carpet squares in place.*

Peter Knife



## AGM and MEMBERSHIP 2016/17

This year's AGM was held with the August meeting, deferred from July as there was no July general meeting this year.

There is no change to the office bearers or committee for the coming year.

Membership fees were also held at \$10 per member, and renewals are now due. Our Treasurer has been sending membership cards to people who have renewed in the last year or two. If you have such a card, please check the expiry date on it as you may have paid a year in advance! If you don't have a card, then your membership will have expired.

Please send your renewal to the address on the form, or alternatively you can use direct bank deposit. The museum's bank account is: Bendigo Bank, BSB 633-000 and account 136921376 (please include your name in the details).

There is a place on the form to indicate if you would like to receive your newsletter by email instead of having it posted. We are trying to keep our costs in check, and postage has risen significantly. Don't worry, if you don't select email then we will continue to post out your copy.

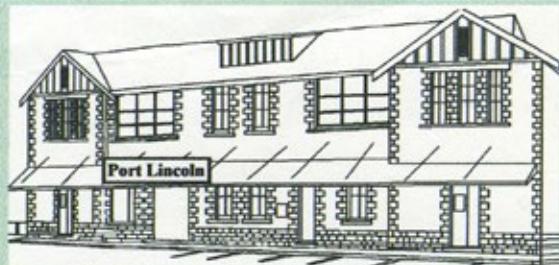
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### Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society

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street address	<input type="text"/>	
town & pc	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
phone h & w	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Date

## EPRPS Committee 2016-17

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