



Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc.

PO Box 2736, Port Lincoln SA 5606

NEWSLETTER

March 2019

111 YEARS OF HISTORY COMING TO AN END

After months of speculation and uncertainty, it was officially announced on 26 March that grain train operations on Eyre Peninsula would cease after 31 May 2019.

Viterra and GWA had been unable to agree on terms for a contract extension, so Viterra opted to abandon rail and move to road haulage for all its Eyre Peninsula grain movements.

The gypsum trains which run between Thevenard and the Lake Macdonnell mine at Kevin are unaffected, as these are run under a contract between GWA and Gypsum Resources Australia (GRA).

The end result is that GWA will be closing down the Port Lincoln depot, and with it the jobs of 33 employees covering the track maintenance, train operations and workshops

teams. The lines from Port Lincoln to Penong Junction (near Ceduna) and Cummins to Kimba will become 'services suspended' — not officially closed, but disused.

The last train to Kimba ran without fanfare on 20 December 2018. 906-850-1204-1203 left Port Lincoln on #5BG1 with 61 HAN and AHGX hoppers, and after dropping 14 hoppers at Edillilie and another 11 at Rudall, took the remaining 36 on to Kimba. It arrived back in Port Lincoln on 21 December after picking up the other hoppers en route. A poor season in the area combined with significant road haulage of grain direct to Crystal Brook left very little for rail to bring down.

No further trains are expected to reach Kimba before the shutdown, however trains are continuing to serve the bunker site at Rudall. Trains are also expected to run as far as Wudinna until late in the piece, and the final service will be a Cummins run.



Left: The first of the 'last trains' (although not known as that at the time), the last Kimba service was captured leaving Port Lincoln on 20 December 2019.

Peter Knife

THANK YOU LADIES, WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP!

We were fortunate to have Cindy Ralph and Gina Shelton as volunteers to open the museum on one Sunday a month. After two years of faithful attendance, their final day on duty was 20 October 2018.

The ladies seemed to enjoy quite a few moments of hilarity along the way, and their efforts were greatly appreciated as it eased the demands on the other volunteers at a time of various illnesses.



NEW MUSEUM COMPUTER

Our current 'office' computer was approaching the end of its life, and was not capable of running the newest image-handling software available. Greg Williams at Lincoln Computer Centre took a donated younger PC and equipped it with a solid state drive and current software. We then copied all our current data files across, and are now up and running on a much-improved PC.

This change became a necessity for us to run a new program which gives us very convenient access to our digital image collection. For now, we are using this program on the 'office' PC but hope to access a grant to purchase a touch-screen 'kiosk' which visitors to the museum can use.



Above: A screen shot of the new image kiosk program.

Left: Greg Williams with the rebuilt computer. Peter Knife

RAILWAY CHRISTMAS TOY

We are delighted to have added another railway Christmas toy to our collection. Gordon Keith Oates very kindly donated this toy locomotive which he received as an 8-year-old at Christmas 1948. Gordon's father Henry Charles Carman ('Charlie') Oates was a shorthand typist in the station building from 1941 to 1949.

Each year the Port Lincoln workshops staff made Christmas toys for the children of SAR employees across Eyre Peninsula. This particular one was made by the apprentices.

In his teenage years Gordon 'repaired' some damage to the locomotive, using electrolytic capacitors to replace the funnel and steam dome which had disappeared under rough handling in his younger days. He also added an air tank under the bunker.

We are delighted to have this example of the way the railwaymen looked after their extended railway 'family'. It joins the cockatoo donated by Joyce Rodriguez, made as a Christmas toy in the workshops by her father Fred Hooker.



ADVANCE NOTICE – IMPORTANT MEETINGS

The imminent closure of grain train operations and the consequent withdrawal of GWA from Port Lincoln mean that the future of the Railway Museum in its present location cannot be taken for granted.

Interim arrangements are in place with GWA for us to remain where we are while the site clean-up proceeds and the future of the rail yard and buildings is resolved.

Our regular June meeting will be deferred a week to Thursday 27 June, and the Society's Annual General Meeting will be on Thursday 18 July. All meetings are at 3:30 pm at the station.

By the June meeting we will need to get into detailed discussions about future possibilities. We would encourage all with an interest in our future to attend.

1940s RAILCAR CHARTERS

Some old 'SPL docket' (correspondence files originated in the Port Lincoln Superintendent's office) have recently come to light, and they included two interesting examples of railcars being chartered for special runs.

Port Lincoln–Warrachie

Elder Smith & Co Ltd were holding a big farm clearing sale on a property at Warrachie on Wednesday 10 March 1948, so they arranged for a special Fageol railcar to run from Port Lincoln for the day. The timetable was:

Port Lincoln dep.	7:00 am
Warrachie arr.	10:08 am
Railcar runs to Lock to turn.	
Warrachie dep.	6:00 pm
Port Lincoln arr.	9:04 pm

On the day before, Elders requested that a trailer be attached between Cummins and Warrachie to cater for the number of travellers expected.

The train was quite popular, with passengers joining at Port Lincoln (5), Coomunga (3), Pearlah (1), Edillilie (5), Cummins (24), Yeelanna (12), Kaldow (5), Coomaba (6) and Murdinga (1). In addition, one passenger took advantage of the service and travelled from Port Lincoln to Lock, while another joined at Coomaba on the return to go to Cummins. Elders had paid a guarantee of £18-18-6, but as ticket sales came to £29-0-9 the guarantee was refunded in full.

Right: Fageol 110 was hauling car 50 and a parcels trailer as it arrived at Lock. A carriage like this would have trailed the Elders' railcar to Warrachie.

CLEARING SALE

ON THE FARM, adjoining WARRACHIE SIDING, on

WEDNESDAY, 10th MARCH,
at 11 A.M. sharp.

ELDER, SMITH & CO. LIMITED,

have received instructions from Mr. P. J. and Mrs. C. SAMPSON, who have let their farms on shares, to offer by auction, as under:—

1,000	SHEEP	1,000
27	HORSES	27
1	JERSEY COW	1

PLANT AND SUNDRIES

*SHEEP comprise—195 Wethers, 3½ and 4½ yrs., fat; 270 mixed sex Hogsgets; 400 mated Ewes, good line of breeders, to be drafted for age; 120 Lambs, mixed sexes as dropped; 6 Rams.

HORSES comprise—25 Draught Horses, right ages and good workers; 2 Hacks.

PLANT, including—Harvester Tractor Pull; Combine Tractor Pull; 2 10ft. A.L. Sun Harvesters; 8ft. Sunshine Oilbath Binder; 14-disc Shearer Plough; 12-disc Shearer Plough; 21 Shearer Cultivator; 19 Shearer Cultivator; 17 Shearer Cultivator; 2 sets 8-leaf Shearer Harrows; 20 Shearer Liftyne Combine; 16 Shearer Liftyne Combine; 20 Shearer Disc Drill; 2 4-wheel Jinkers, with hay frames; 2-wheel Jinker; set Drill Harrows; Portable 7 h.p. English Blackstone Engine; Horwood Bagshaw Chaffcutter; 12ft. Chaff Elevator; 36ft. Fire Rake; 2 Tip Drays; pair Dray Wheels; 2 Jinker Motor Truck Chassis, with springs; 1 Turntable, complete; set 12-horse Roller Chains; large quantity Body Chains; Plough Chains; Spiders; Harness; Dray Saddles; Riding Saddles; Swings and Spreader Bars; 200 bags Fulham Seed Oats, cleaned ready for drill; 40 bags Feed Oats; 2 200-gall. Square Tanks; 400-gall. Square Tank; 200-gall. Round Tank; quantity Troughing; quantity Tin. Galv. Piping and Fittings; 3 Pig Feeders; Cement Pig Troughs; 2 sets Crop Lifters; 2 Special Barley Sieves; large quantity usual Farm Sundries.

The Auctioneers have inspected the above plant, which is in excellent condition and can recommend attendance.

TERMS CASH.

Special Rail Car leaving Port Lincoln at 7 a.m. for Sale, and will pick up at any Intermediate Station or Siding, and will return to Lincoln same evening, leaving Warrachie at 6 p.m.

Luncheon and Afternoon Tea will be provided by the Lock branch of C.W.A.

Minnipa–Cummins

The LeHunte Football Association chartered a Brill railcar and two trailers to bring their Association teams to Cummins for a carnival on Saturday 20 August 1949. Conveniently, a railcar was stabled at Minnipa over the weekend so no empty running was needed. The timetable brought the teams down in time for the start of the matches, then allowed plenty of time for celebrations afterwards! A no doubt well-lubricated crowd rejoined the train at midnight for the trip home.

Minnipa dep.	7:23 am
Cummins arr.	11:30 am
Sunday 21 August:	
Cummins dep.	12:01 am
Minnipa arr.	4:05 am

Passengers joined at Minnipa(21), Wudinna (33) and other sidings (52). The Association paid a guarantee of £72-2-6, and ticket sales of £104-8-7 meant that the Association's guarantee was refunded. There was no mention in the file of the condition of the

railcar after its return to Minnipa!



MISHAP AT POOCHERA, 1946

No. 301 Mixed was a train which ran on Friday evenings from Minnipa to Thevenard, connecting off the railcar from Port Lincoln which terminated at Minnipa. At the time, No. 301 left Minnipa at 6:40 pm and shunted at all sidings along the way. A single carriage was included immediately in front of the brakevan for any passengers who braved the journey – arrival at Thevenard was scheduled for 3:16 am Saturday.

On 11 October 1946 loco T216 had a load of 549 tons. On arrival at Poochera the train was stopped part of the way into the yard. The loco and 20 wagons uncoupled and pulled forward so that three sheep vans (one MM and two SFN) could be hand shunted to the sheep ramp. The MM and one SFN were moved and unloaded successfully, but as the third van (SFN8156) was being hand shunted to the siding, the fireman on the loco saw what he thought was a signal to reverse onto the train and informed the driver, who began shunting back. The sheep van had not cleared the main line when open wagon Yx6127 collided with it. Both vehicles ended up tilted and balancing on two wheels each.

As a precaution the sheep were evacuated from the van before attempting to separate the vehicles. T216 moved the front part of the train (20 vehicles) to the siding, then returned to ease the tilted vehicles apart. One axle of the Yx derailed during this process but it was quickly rerailed. The Yx was carrying freight for Poochera anyway, so it was left in the siding along with the sheep vans when the rest of the train was

put back together.

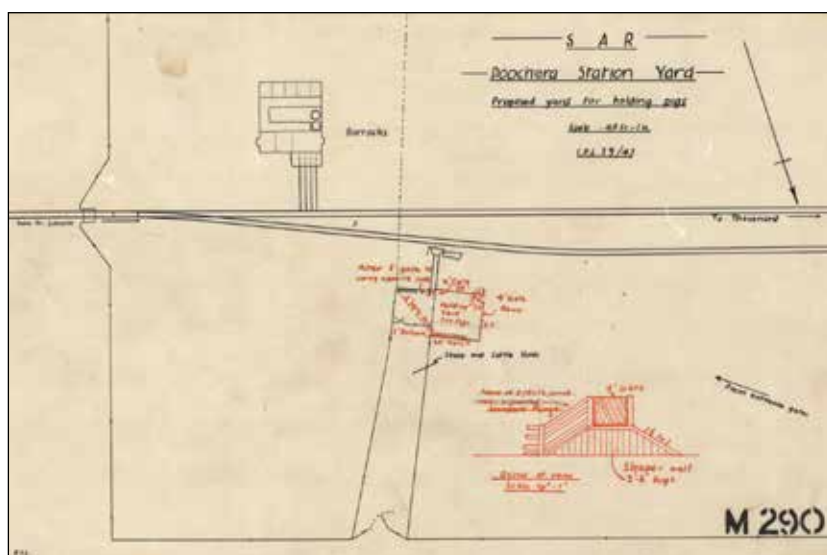
The only damage to the rolling stock was a broken footboard on the sheep van. The sheep didn't fare so well though, being tossed into a heap against the side of the van as it tilted. One died soon after and three more died two days later from injuries. There was also slight damage to an engine being delivered to the Poochera Hotel and included in the freight in the open wagon.

The whole incident added 75 minutes to the time taken by No. 301 at Poochera. One wonders what the passengers thought about it all – being left outside the station; vans being pushed by hand for unloading; and then the collision as they watched proceedings. In the end it was assumed that the fireman mistook one of the onlookers carrying a torch as the signal to back up. No staff were reprimanded, although letters were sent telling them to 'take more care'.

The hapless farmer who lost sheep as a result of the incident lodged a claim for £10 in compensation. The Superintendent dismissed the claim, saying that the circumstances 'do not suggest any negligence on the part of railway staff' and also reminding him that 'livestock is received for conveyance at Owner's Risk'.

Right: A 1946 plan showing the livestock ramp at Poochera. The wagons collided at the convergence of the siding and main line.

EPRPS Archives



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