Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc.

PO Box 2736, Port Lincoln SA 5606

NEWSLETTER

September 2020

COVID-19: UNEXPECTED IMPACTS

2020 has seen the COVID-19 pandemic disrupt lives and livelihoods. To date Port Lincoln has largely escaped the virus itself, however the Museum has been seriously disrupted by the necessary restrictions which have been imposed to control the virus.

As COVID-19 spread we decided as a precaution to close the museum to visitors. Our last opening day was 18 March. A few days later the decision was taken out of our hands anyway when the Government directed all galleries and museums to close.

By mid May it was becoming likely that we would be allowed to reopen. The SA History Trust ran a couple of excellent webinars over Zoom, and these gave us plenty of guidance on preparations and management.

We reopened on 7 June, but under strict Government rules and with a CovidSafe Plan which specifies how we must operate. This includes:

- Visitors signing in with contact details recorded.
- Hand sanitiser facilities at key locations.
- Limits on people in each room.
- Extensive disinfection of "touch points" before, after and while open.
- Restrictions on touching certain displays.

More recently, the rules have changed and four of our volunteers have completed the certification as Covid Marshals.

While we are open now, complying with the rules means we need more volunteers on duty than we have needed in the past. With only a small regular volunteer group, we are unable to maintain twice a week openings and are currently only open regularly on Wednesdays. We will also be trialling being open on three Sundays in the upcoming school holidays.

Financially, COVID-19 has had a major impact on the Museum. Three cruise ships were cancelled at the end of the 2019/20 season, and five more scheduled for 2020/21 have already been cancelled with probably more to follow suit. Opening one day a week has also impacted on our income. We have calculated that we lost over $1,300 to 30 June and on current projections, will potentially miss out on $1,500 more by Christmas.

The COVID-19 sign-in table at the Museum.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

At the Society's August General Meeting the members voted to award Life Membership to Margaret Tilsner.

Margaret was central to moves back in 1992 to explore the possibility of establishing a Port Lincoln Railway Museum. Seven years later that dream became reality, due in no small part to Margaret's drive and tenacity in ensuring that such a vital part of Port Lincoln's history was not lost.

She has been a faithful committee member and supporter ever since, even though her health is limiting her active involvement.

We are proud of her achievements, and grateful for her thoughtful guidance and advice over the years. Her wealth of local historical knowledge has come to the fore in many discussions.

Margaret's Life Membership is very well deserved.

Julie Lihou, Maggie Knife, Neil Lihou, Peter Knife, Bob Prout, Trevor Hoskin and Margaret Watt presented the Life Membership certificate to Margaret Tilsner. Photos: Peter Knife

NEW CASH REGISTER

For over 20 years the Museum has used pen and paper to record attendances and sales. Thanks to a Commonwealth Government grant, we are now using a new cash register and barcoding system to make life easier for the volunteers.

Rowan Ramsay MP, the Member for Grey, visited the Museum soon after the system was installed. He spent time looking through the Museum and chatting to some of our members.

WORKSHOPS PRECINCT HERITAGE LISTED

The Port Lincoln workshops in August 1970.

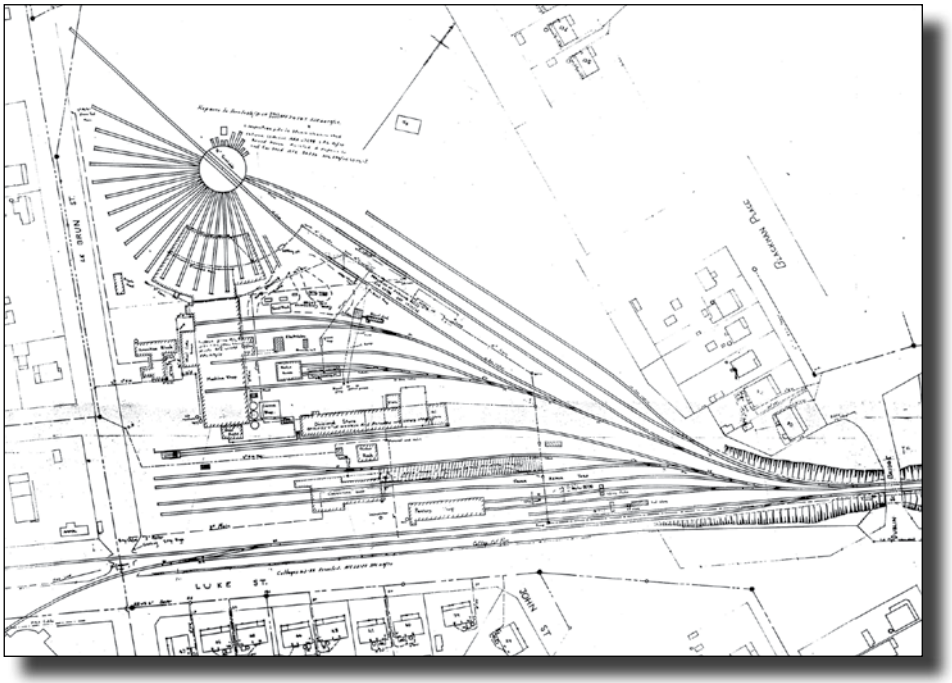
Late last year the railway workshops, roundhouse and turntable complex at Port Lincoln was provisionally entered on the State Heritage Register. Following a consultation period, in June the SA Heritage Council confirmed the precinct as a State Heritage Place.

The workshops have been a vital part of railway operations on Eyre Peninsula. Externally they remain largely unchanged from when they were built in the 1920s and 1930s, and form the last remaining intact workshops and roundhouse combination in the State.

The workshops employed many skilled tradesmen, and many apprentices had their start here and at Islington workshops in Adelaide before moving on to other employment later.

Although not involved in the nomination process, the EPRPS welcomes the listing of the workshops, as it provides a level of protection for a key historical precinct into the future.

In the short term, nothing changes around the precinct. One Rail Australia (formerly Genessee & Wyoming) are still using the workshops for wagon rebuilding, with iron ore hoppers from Whyalla and gypsum hoppers from Thevenard brought in by road for attention. It is good to see the workshops still being used for railway purposes.



The new Heritage listing covers the whole workshops precinct, including the roundhouse and turntable, the main workshop building and all existing smaller structures on the site.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

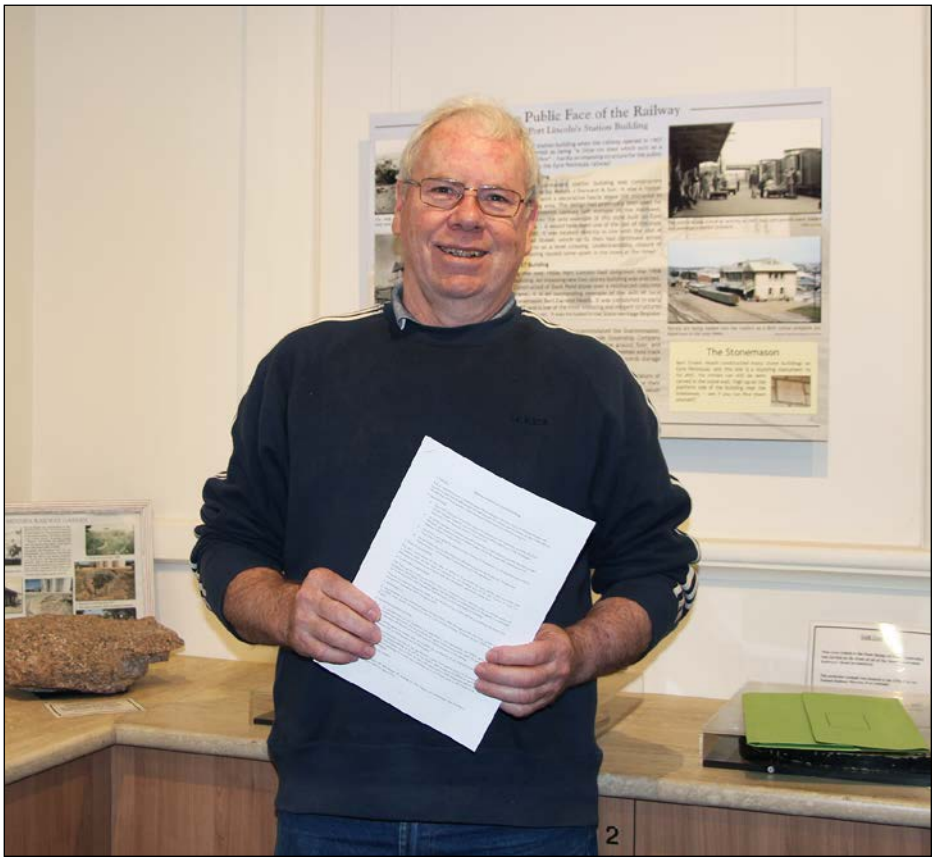
The West Coast Recorder
AND EYRE PENINSULA CHRONICLE
With which is incorporated the Streaky Bay Standard.
Established 1904. PORT LINCOLN, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1913. 8s. per annum, posted. Single Copy 2d.

The EPRPS is working with the Port Lincoln History Group to assist in the digitisation of the *West Coast Recorder* newspaper. The National Library's online Trove facility includes millions of pages of old newspapers from around Australia. There are still many gaps in coverage, including the lower Eyre Peninsula prior to 1927. The *Recorder* fills this gap, but was unlikely to be added to Trove in the normal course of business for many years.

The History Group had identified donors willing to support the bringing forward of the process to digitising the *Recorder* (and later issues of the *Port Lincoln Times)*. The EPRPS members are also anxious for this to happen, as we use Trove extensively for our own research, so we agreed to handle the financial aspects of the project. Our deductible gift recipient status means that donations are tax deductible.

The project has been under way from late June, and the first tranche of digitising is already under way. We hope to see the *Recorder* begin to appear on Trove in the next few months.

We are delighted to be able to work with the Port Lincoln History Group on this project, and thank them for their efforts in finding donors and managing the process. We will all reap the benefits.



Chris Mantle, President of the Port Lincoln History Group, at the Railway Museum for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding which launched the collaborative Trove project.

RALPH HOLDEN

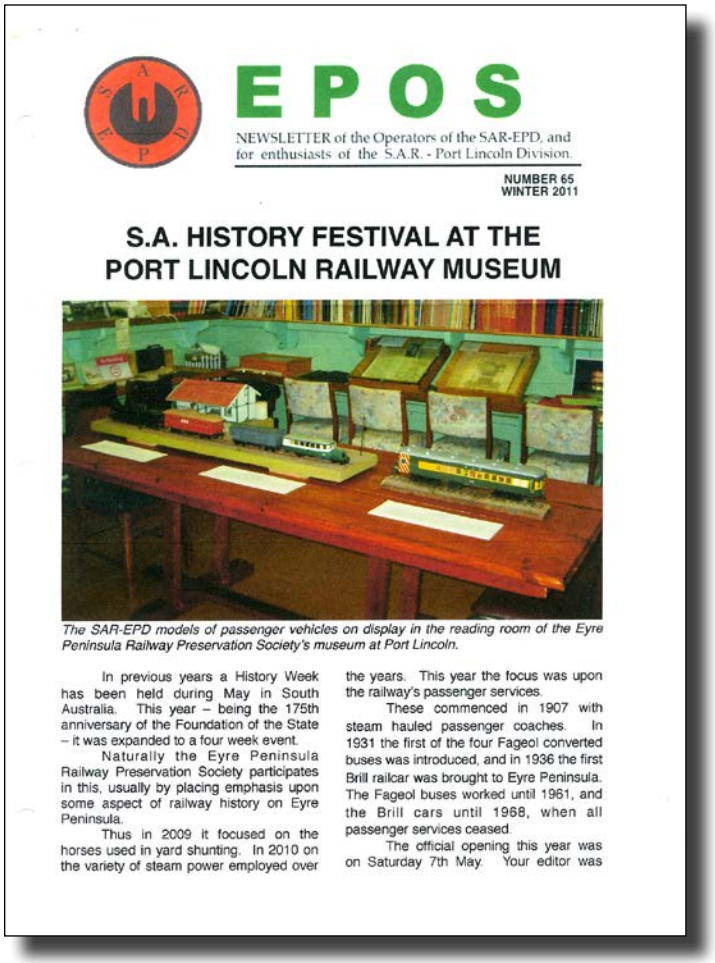
Very sad news came through in August that EPRPS member Rev Ralph Holden had passed away. Ralph is remembered affectionately by members of the EPRPS, and by many Cummins people from his time as Priest-in-Charge at Cummins in the 1960s.

Ralph was an engineer by profession, transitioning later to the ministry. Cummins was a fortuitous posting for him, as it introduced him to the joys of Eyre Peninsula's narrow gauge railways and in particular the decrepit Mount Hope line. Thus began a passion for modelling the Mount Hope line in a larger-than usual scale, running in his garden. Ralph's "SAR-EPD" (South Australian Railways Eyre Peninsula Division) became well known to modellers around the world, mainly through the pages of the *Australian Model Railway Magazine* and the *Garden Railways* magazine. He was a prolific contributor.

In June 1995 Ralph produced the first issue of *EPOS*, a little Newsletter for the small team who operated his SAR-EPD. Each quarter Ralph faithfully produced it, with news of developments on his SAR-EPD, historic snippets about the real Port Lincoln Division, and many entertaining stories written in Ralph's inimitable style. *EPOS* grew to 10 pages and was distributed free to interested parties far and wide, including the EPRPS.

Ralph came to Port Lincoln from his Adelaide home to open the Railway Museum's History Festival display in May 2011. He brought a selection of his magnificent models with him, and these were on display in the Reading Room for the day. He entertained the assembled crowd with some wonderful stories of his Cummins experiences and his modelling challenges.

Failing health meant that Ralph decided to make *EPOS* number 100, issued earlier this year, the final issue. He passed away several months later, at the age of 86.



EPOS

NEWSLETTER of the Operators of the SAR-EPD, and for enthusiasts of the S.A.R. - Port Lincoln Division.

NUMBER 65
WINTER 2011

S.A. HISTORY FESTIVAL AT THE PORT LINCOLN RAILWAY MUSEUM

The SAR-EPD models of passenger vehicles on display in the reading room of the Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society's museum at Port Lincoln.

In previous years a History Week has been held during May in South Australia. This year – being the 175th anniversary of the Foundation of the State – it was expanded to a four week event.

Naturally the Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society participates in this, usually by placing emphasis upon some aspect of railway history on Eyre Peninsula.

Thus in 2009 it focused on the horses used in yard shunting. In 2010 on the variety of steam power employed over the years. This year the focus was upon the railway's passenger services.

These commenced in 1907 with steam hauled passenger coaches. In 1931 the first of the four Fageol converted buses was introduced, and in 1936 the first Brill railcar was brought to Eyre Peninsula. The Fageol buses worked until 1961, and the Brill cars until 1968, when all passenger services ceased.

The official opening this year was on Saturday 7th May. Your editor was

850 STILL UNDER WRAPS

850 is still sitting under its protective tarpaulin. We had hoped that the new shed might have been under way by now, but the 2019/20 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic brought fundraising to a halt.

Donations are beginning to come in again now, and to date over $3,500 has been raised. We are very appreciative of the support received to date, but more is needed to bring the plan to fruition.

The Museum currently has a grant application lodged for a significant portion of the cost, and hope for a favourable outcome in the next couple of months.

For those who have already donated: we thank you, and please be patient. We're getting there.

For everyone else: all help appreciated! For donations, please see http://eprps.org.au/going-loco.html or phone the Treasurer.

"So near, and yet..." 850 and HAN3 in their temporary location and on temporary bogies on a damp 13 October 2019, before the Port Lincoln SES very kindly placed the large protective tarp over 850.

POST-CLOSURE RETROSPECTIVE

A little more than a year has passed now since the last grain train rolled into Port Lincoln. Truck volumes were noticeably higher last harvest despite the lower-than-average shipments. However DPTI have given conditional approval for A-triple road trains, after a single test run and no road upgrades yet on Lower Eyre. That's our future.

GWA ran the rail lines out of Port Lincoln for 22 years, investing millions in maintaining services in a "fit for purpose" state. The network was maintained sufficiently to run to Wudinna or Kimba on a continual 24 hour cycle. This was no mean feat with 50-year-old locomotives and rolling stock, but the lack of long term haulage contracts discouraged any heavier investment.

The Eyre Peninsula network, like many of South Australia's rural lines, was built to open up the interior of the State for agriculture. Many townships grew up along the lines, and the railway was the lifeline for these communities.

Improved roads saw railway traffic shrink to what rail does best — bulk haulage. Many of the smaller settlements disappeared. Farm consolidations have further hollowed out rural populations.

One hundred and twelve years since the first train left Port Lincoln, a way of life has finally disappeared from lower Eyre Peninsula. Gypsum is still hauled by rail from Lake Macdonnell to Thevenard, but the grain lines are silent.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: MURAT BAY JETTY LINE

The railway was opened to Thevenard in February 1915, but the jetty at Thevenard wasn't completed until 1920. Until then, the Murat Bay jetty in Ceduna had to suffice for shipping.

Docket CPW 2012/14 in State Archives traces this story. A large number of farmers petitioned the Government in December 1914 to provide a "temporary loop line" to allow SAR wagons to be taken to the Murat Bay jetty (the railway line skirted the southern edge of the township).

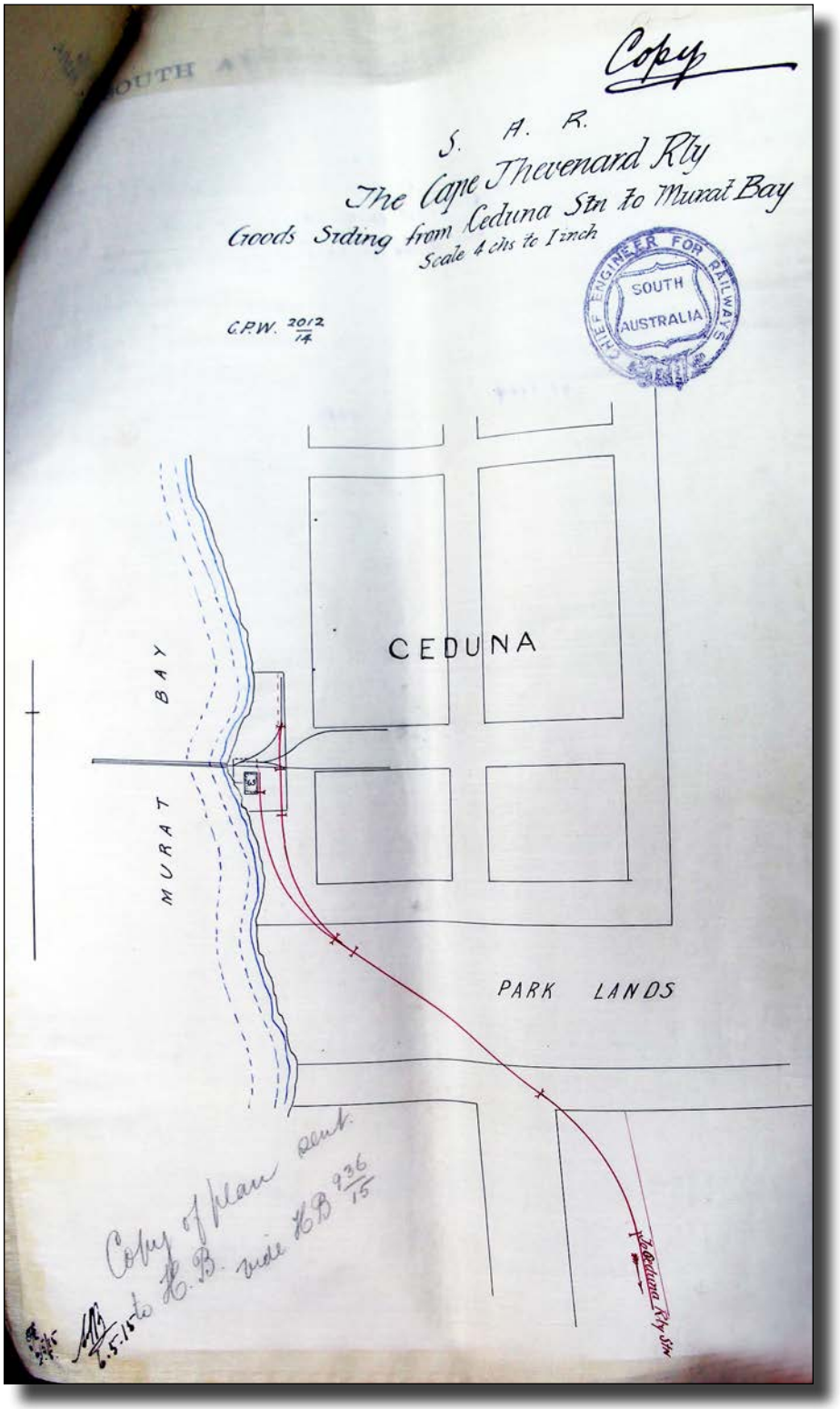
The Harbors Board initially said that they would build a "very cheap tram line" to Ceduna siding, but three weeks later the offer was withdrawn.

On 17 March 1915 the Chief Engineer was instructed to take immediate action to make the temporary connection to the jetty. The accompanying plan of May 1915 shows the line cutting diagonally across what was then parkland (now the Ceduna Foreshore Caravan Park) and passing in front of the hotel, then crossing the jetty tracks which ran to bagged grain stacking areas. A sharply-curved connection allowed rail wagons to be taken onto the jetty.

The Resident Engineer advised on 27 December 1915 that the line was ready for traffic.

In late 1922 or early 1923 the line was extended further along O'Loughlin Street to serve an SA Wheat Board shed.

The line was cut back to the south side of Day Terrace in 1932, and the remainder was removed in 1937.



1915 plan showing the "temporary" line to the Murat Bay jetty (it lasted 17 years). At its southern end the line curved into the Ceduna station yard and connected to the loop siding there.

EPRPS AGM 2020 and ANNUAL REPORTS

The Society's Annual General meeting was deferred from July to August to make allowance for COVID-19 restrictions. All Office Bearers and the members of the Oversight Committee were re-elected.

The full Annual Report for 2019/20 is available on our website at www.eprps.org.au/governance.html. If you would like a copy posted out, please contact the Treasurer on 0417 401 364.

President's Report

Most of the President's Report mentions items already covered in this Newsletter and in the previous issue. It concludes:

"By mid-March this year we were on track to record our best year ever for attendances at the Museum, but then the COVID-19 pandemic upended everyone's lives. The Museum was forced to close for 10 weeks. With three volunteers needed now to allow us to comply with COVID-19 restrictions, we are only opening on Wednesdays. Our six regular volunteers would really appreciate some assistance from new people!

"It has been a year which has seen significant changes for the EPRPS and the Museum. With One Rail vacating the top floor of the station, we are taking on responsibility for the whole building. We have some exciting (and different) ideas for the top floor – watch for announcements during the year!

"Special thanks must go to Faye Davis and Peter Treloar for joining our Oversight Committee. Both bring a depth of experience to our situation, vital as we are now a Deductible Gift Recipient. And a huge thank-you to the faithful few who are still able to volunteer for open days and working bees: Trevor and Di Hoskin, Maggie Knife, Neil Lihou, Bob Prout, Margaret Watt and Des Wiseman. Without your efforts we would not be able to fulfil the Museum's purpose."

Treasurer's Report

Here are some highlights extracted from the Treasurer's Report:

"You will notice that our Financial Statements look a little different this year. This is due to our new Deductible Gift Recipient status and the requirement to provide accounts in the same format as other similar organisations.

"Despite the cancellation of three cruise ship visits and the 10 week closure, our attendance income is only slightly below last year's, mostly due to the increase in our admission fees. Actual numbers visiting were around 300 fewer than last year. Membership subscriptions were more than double the previous year, partly due to an increase in our fees but also an increase in paid-up membership.

"Grants totalling $6,800 were received during the year. The History Trust of SA very kindly provided $5,000 for the purchase of our image kiosk as well as $300 to assist with the purchase of supplies of hand sanitiser and cleaning wipes required in order to re-open the museum. The Federal Government provided a volunteers' grant of $1,500 for the purchase of a cash register and barcode scanning equipment.

"Expenses for the year were fairly much in line with the previous year, with the exception of printing consumables which were considerably lower due to reduced printing and a new printer with lower toner costs."

GRANT FOR A3 SCANNER

The EPRPS is fortunate to have received a grant from the History Trust of South Australia to purchase a new A3 flatbed scanner.

We have had an A4 scanner for many years, but it is unsuitable for scanning our Foolscap-size documents and registers. We have thousands of pages of these, most of which are handwritten and are the only copies in existence. Some have been done using borrowed equipment, but this new one will speed up the process considerably.

Being photo-quality, it will be useful for scanning larger photos and prints which our old device can't handle.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

It's that time of year! Membership fees have been kept the same as last year, and we would love to have your continued support.

One Rail Australia (formerly GWA) are in the process of vacating the top floor of the station building, so from 1 October the EPRPS will be taking on a lease of the whole building. While this opens up exciting future prospects for the Museum, it also comes with substantial additional costs. In the short term our finances have taken a hit from the COVID-19 pandemic, so membership fees and donations are very welcome!

You can now also make a secure online donation to the 850 shed project via http://www.eprps.org.au/going-loco.html.

Remember, all donations of $2 and over to the EPRPS are tax deductible.

Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc.
ABN 60 690 052 848
Railway Place
Port Lincoln
South Australia 5606.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Name _____

Postal Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Phone _____

Email _____

I would like to ☐ become a member
☐ renew my membership

I wish to receive newsletters by:
☐ Email
☐ Post

Payment is for ☐ Membership ($15)
☐ Donation $ _____ (tax deductible)

☐ Cheque/money order (please make cheque payable to **Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc**)

☐ Direct Deposit: BSB: 633-000
A/c No: 136921376
A/c Name: EPRPS Inc

☐ Credit Card (Mastercard or Visa only)

Card number _____

Name on card _____

Expiry _____ CVV (three digits on back of card)_____

Signature _____Date _____

Please post this form (and cheque if applicable) to:
The Treasurer, Eyre Peninsula Railway Preservation Society Inc, PO Box 2736, PORT LINCOLN SA 5606
or email to: treasurer@ eprps.org.au

Office use only Receipt No Date

EPRPS Office Bearers 2020-21

President	Peter Knife	(08) 8684-3647	0428-119-287	president@eprps.org.au
Vice-President	Bob Prout	(08) 8682-2914		
Secretary	Trevor Hoskin	(08) 8682-6669	0428-826-669	secretary@eprps.org.au
Treasurer	Maggie Knife	(08) 8684-3647	0417-401-364	treasurer@eprps.org.au

Website: http://www.eprps.org.au
Facebook: Port Lincoln Railway Museum

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