

Peninsula Pioneer *Revisited*

A history of the railways of Eyre Peninsula and their role in the settlement and development of the region

Supplement to the Book November 2014



Current grain train operations on Eyre Peninsula are represented by this view of #3CG2 behind 851/859/906/1204 near Kyancutta on 20 May 2014.
Greg O'Brien

The task of historical research is a never-ending pursuit, and that applies especially to the Port Lincoln Division of the South Australian Railways. *Peninsula Pioneer Revisited* is a comprehensive account of this fascinating isolated narrow gauge network, but since its publication further interesting snippets have come to light which add to the story. This document is intended to supplement the book, adding these little extras as well as updating where appropriate with some changes which have occurred since the book was published, and including a few new photographs.

Topics are presented with page references in the order in which they appear in the book.

Peter Knife

Murat Bay Siding (p.35)

Agitation for a rail connection to Murat Bay jetty began as construction of the Nunjikompita-Thevenard line was under way. A petition dated 9 December 1914 was presented to the Commissioner of Public Works, asking for a 'temporary loop line' to Murat Bay jetty pending completion of the new Thevenard jetty. To achieve this the Harbors Board suggested that a cheap tram line to carry their trucks be laid instead of a rail siding; the offer was withdrawn soon after!

Construction of the siding was reported as completed on 13 December 1915, and the Superintendent advised the CME on 27 December that the siding was ready for traffic. By 10 January 1916 'several truckloads of goods' had passed over the new line. The Weekly Notice of 7 February 1916 made the opening of the line official.

Over the next few years farmers between Minnipa and Ceduna faced a dilemma. If they shipped their wheat via Murat Bay it had to go by coastal vessel to Port Adelaide or Port Lincoln, then be transhipped to go overseas. Better prices were available if they railed to Port Lincoln, however the mileage rate charged by the Railways negated that advantage. Completion of the new Thevenard jetty (allowing

direct overseas shipment) was the answer, but delays with the building of the jetty and dredging of the Waterwitch Channel resulted in the Wheat Harvest Board being reluctant to use Thevenard. Following a petition from a large number of farmers, the Board announced on 26 November 1920 that from that season (1920/21) all wheat from Minnipa and sidings north would go via Thevenard.

The grain stacks adjacent to the jetty at Murat Bay were still used for receiving wheat, which meant that the SAR were then hauling bagged grain from Murat Bay to Thevenard. In late 1922 the siding was extended a short distance north along O'Loughlin Terrace to serve stacks located on the foreshore there.¹



Above and below: These photos were reputedly taken when the first train shunted to Murat Bay jetty (January 1915). On this occasion Wx34 has shunted its whole train (fifteen C wagons, carriage and Blue Brake) to the goods shed adjacent to the jetty.

Percy Langes (above) and Lorna Schwarz (below), both courtesy Murray Collins.



Lake Macdonnell Gypsum Mining (p.44)

The caption for the upper middle photo mentions possible use of a tractor. A Fordson tractor (probably only one) was used on the tramway to bring mined gypsum to the ropeway 'sending station' at Lake Macdonnell (see photo of the tractor on p.344). The shed in this photo was used to house the tractor.

Cresco Fertilisers (p.70)

The last phosphate rock railed across town from Brennen's Jetty to the Cresco works at Port Lincoln occurred on 6 July 1966.²

Live Sheep Exports (p.72)

SAR shipping records indicate that the first live sheep export ship loaded at Port Lincoln was the MV *Cimbrai* on 19 August 1969, and the last was the MV *Al-Kurarin* on 28 September 1980.²

Cummins Flour Mill (p.73)

Cummins Mill closed briefly in May 1954. It reopened shortly after when taken over by Aubrey Heidenreich, who upgraded its plant.

The Cummins Butter Factory (adjacent to the Flour Mill) opened on 20 June 1926, and was an alternative destination for cream cans consigned by farmers and conveyed on the railcars. It was taken over by Adelaide Milk Supply Co-operative Ltd (Amscol) in January 1937, and closed during WWII due to manpower shortages. The factory building is now used for storage by Cummins Mill.³

Current Operations (p.76)

New contract arrangements between GWA and Viterra (now a subsidiary of Glencore) came into effect in May 2014. In place of the previous two rakes of 54 wagons for grain traffic, a single rake of 64 wagons is now used. The intention is that the total volume of grain rail-hauled into Port Lincoln will be the same. To assist in achieving this, more 'double Cummins' days (where the train makes two return trips to Cummins in one 24-hour period) will be scheduled.

Motive power for the expanded rake was intended to be the two ex-WAGR 1200 class and two 830/900 class, but the train commonly runs with two 1200s and one 830/900. Two 830/900 locos substitute for a 1200 when the larger unit is unavailable.

GWA brought the workshops facilities 'in house' in mid-2014, taking over from Downer EDI who had operated the workshops since the formation of ASR.

Port Lincoln Overhead Tank (p.87)

This tank, which was located adjacent to the Dublin Street bridge, was built with the line. The tank was disused and rusting when it and the stand were demolished in 1951. The footings for the tank stand are still visible beside the new (1977) Dublin Street bridge.⁴

Loco Watering Locations (p.93)

Figure 7.4 should not show Kimba as a watering station for the years 1915-19. The Working Timetables for the period incorrectly included this reference.



Above: On rare occasions both 1200 class locos are unavailable, resulting in five Alcos working the grain train. 906/848/859/873/851 are seen arriving at Kimba on one such occasion, 10 May 2014.

Peter Knife

Kimba Water Trains 1967-68 (p.97)

The timetable for the water trains from 31 December 1967 was (daily):

- No. 82 Rudall, dep. 5:00 am for Taragoro
- No. 83 Taragoro, dep. 6:10 am for Kimba
- No. 206 Kimba, dep. 12:45 pm for Taragoro
- No. 207 Taragoro, dep. 5:15 pm for Rudall

The train stayed overnight at Rudall, where crew barracks were located. The service was cancelled from and including 20 January 1968.⁵

Port Lincoln and Thevenard AWB Depots (p.103, 212 and 230)

These depots were decommissioned as emergency grain storages between September 1970 and September 1971.⁶

Last Bagged Grain Shipped ex Port Lincoln (p.106)

The last bagged wheat shipped from Port Lincoln was a small consignment of 2,990 bags on the MV *Tarinna* on 14 August 1970, and the last bagged barley shipment was 13,249 bags on the MV *Naharia* on 22 August 1970.²

Last Train to Buckleboo (p.118 and 365)

ARG Train Notices show that the last working was BH1/BH2 on 8 March 2005, scheduled for three locos and 45 wagons ex Port Lincoln (some would have been dropped at intermediate sidings).⁷

Last Grain Trains Beyond Wudinna (p.118)

ARG Train Notices for the 2005/06 period show these as the last grain trains to run to sidings beyond Wudinna:

17-20 Apr 2005	CP1/CP2	Thevenard
20 Jul 2005	CN1/CN2	Nunjikompita
1 Aug 2005	CL1/CL2	Cungena
5 Sep 2005	CK1/CK2	Poochera
19 Sep 2005	CJ1/CJ2	Minnipa

A new five-year contract between ARG, ABB Grain and AWB Ltd then came into effect. Under the new contract, grain trains only ran as far as Wudinna and Kimba.⁷

Parcels Delivery in Port Lincoln (p.122)

The Garford road truck in the photo on Brennen's Jetty was the first of several used over the years for deliveries in the town area. A plan of the initial delivery routes is in the Port Lincoln Railway Museum (see image at right).

Second Weekly Kimba Railcar Service (p.135)

The railcars brought fresh cream from farms to the butter factories at Cummins and Port Lincoln. A weekly service was not sufficient to cater for all of the fresh cream supply, as locals on the Kimba line were sending half-weekly supplies to Adelaide by road bus.

The additional Friday down/Saturday up Kimba railcar service introduced on 28 August 1936 was aimed at capturing the cream traffic which had been going by bus.

The service was obviously a success (and not just for the cream traffic) as it remained in the timetable right to the end of passenger services on the Port Lincoln Division in August 1968.



Above: Map of Port Lincoln in the 1920s, showing the initial parcel delivery routes (numbered 1 to 6) around the town area. Also of interest is the 'Site Acquired for Naval Base' (this site was where the BHP limesands tramway terminal and shipping facilities were built in the 1960s) and the 'Site Selected for New Wharf' at Kirton Point. Brennen's Jetty was built instead of the proposed wharf.
Port Lincoln Railway Museum

Early Special Trains (p.149)

Additional information has come to light on early special trains, extracted from the docket registers in the Port Lincoln Railway Museum.⁸

- Cummins Show train: 6 Oct 1908, 28 Sep 1909, 18 Oct 1910.
- Port Lincoln Show train (from Cummins): 24 Mar 1909.
- Rev. Ives Sunday School Picnic train: Apr 1909.
- Warunda Sports train: 1 Sep 1909.
- Yeelanna Sports train (from Cummins): 17 Mar 1913.
- Special train to Yeelanna re sale of experimental farm: 25 Apr 1913.
- Railway Picnic trains to Wanilla from both Port Lincoln and Cummins: 10 Oct 1923.
- Picnic train for Mr Venning, Port Lincoln to Cummins: 25 Oct 1923.

Vice-Regal Trains

Special trains were run for official visits to Eyre Peninsula by several State Governors.

Sir Day Hort Bosanquet travelled by regular train from Port Lincoln to Cummins on 20 May 1912, and by special train from there to the construction camp on the Darke's Peak line. He returned the same day with travel arrangements reversed.⁹

Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven toured the Port Lincoln Division, leaving Port Lincoln on 25 June 1929. His special train ran to Buckleboo, returned to Cummins, then to Mount Hope, Wandana and Penong. Return from there was via Thevenard, with arrival back in Port Lincoln on 28 June.¹⁰

Sir Winston Dugan toured by special train with the same routing as the 1929 tour, leaving Port Lincoln on 30 April 1935 and returning on 3 May.¹¹

Derailments (p.154)

An extreme example of the incidence of derailments occurred on 29 March 1968. Up goods #238 derailed at 56½M between Yeltukka and Ningana, on the Kapinnie line. It was re-railed, made it ¾ mile towards Ningana, and then derailed again!¹²

Safeworking (p.161)

As far back as January 1923 the Stationmaster at Cummins suggested that Automatic Electric Staff working be introduced between Port Lincoln and Cummins. This was when Permissive Block working was still in effect (Train Order working began in 1929 between Port Lincoln and Cummins). Electric Staff would certainly have improved operations on this section right through to the introduction of diesels and heavier trains.⁸

Jetty Shunt Tractors (p.181)

A Fordson Major shunt tractor was trialled on the Port Lincoln jetty, beginning 16 January 1951. It was announced in June 1951 that tractors would replace horses, and that tenders had been called for tractors. Three tractors arrived on 11 November 1951 and replaced the horses from the next day.¹³

Right: SAR shunt tractor T27, formerly used as a jetty tractor at Port Lincoln, languished on a rural property near Karkoo until donated to the Port Lincoln Railway Museum. Cosmetic restoration is under way.

Peter Knife

Moveable Rail Points (Pivot Switches) (p.183)

Adding to the confusion as to the SAR's accepted nomenclature for these points, a number of early docket registers describe them as having 'slide rails and pivot crossings' or being 'sliding rail type'.

Thirty-five sets of pivot switches were used when the line was built. Port Lincoln, Coomunga, Pearlah, Warunda, Edillilie, Pillana, Cummins and Yeelanna were all equipped with them. All had been replaced with conventional points by 1926-27 except for the triangle apex points at Cummins and Yeelanna. This coincides with the arrival of T class 4-8-0 locos at Port Lincoln. Cummins had a turntable from 1925, so T class would have been turned on that rather than using the triangle.

The last pivot switch, the Yeelanna triangle apex, was replaced in 1936. Prior to that the Mount Hope line would have been worked exclusively by smaller six-coupled locos (U, W, Wx, Y and Yx classes).¹⁴

Rail Weights (p.186)

41 lb rail was still in use in the Poochera-Maltee area in 1969. All 41 lb main line rail had been replaced with 63 lb by 1972. The first 80 lb main line rail was laid between Cummins and Ungarra in 1974.¹⁵

'Foreign' Locomotives at Port Lincoln (p.201)

The impact of drought and the reduction in grain train operations out of Port Lincoln meant a lessening of the need for workshop services for most of 2007. To avoid laying off staff and to keep his talented workshop team intact, the EDI Port Lincoln manager arranged for some 'outside' contract work to be passed on to Port Lincoln workshops from EDI Port Augusta.

QR National had taken over the Western Australian operations of ARG, and selected five ex-QR 2100 class locos to be rebuilt and forwarded to WA. The five locos were brought by road from Queensland to Port Lincoln, where they were rebuilt and repainted before being forwarded by road to the West.

QR Number	To Port Lincoln	ARG Number	To Western Australia
2101	May 2007	DD2355	Nov 2007
2105	May 2007	DD2356	Oct 2007
2109	Mid-2007	DD2357	Jun 2008
2117	May 2007	DD2358	Dec 2007
2120	Mid-2007	DD2359	May 2008



A number of GWA locos have since been overhauled at Port Lincoln for narrow gauge operations at Whyalla. They are hauled by road between the two centres.

GWA No.	To Port Lincoln	Work	To Whyalla
CK3	Later in 2008	Overhaul, cab upgrade	Dec 2008/ Jan 2009
CK4	May 2008	Overhaul, cab upgrade	23 Dec 2008
CK5	May 2008	Overhaul, cab upgrade	15 Nov 2008
901	Apr 2010	Repair fire damage	20 Oct 2010
902	Jun 2008	Overhaul	13 Dec 2008
904	2 Jun 2008	Overhaul	29 Sep 2008
1907	9 Feb 2009	Overhaul, new brakes	29 Jun 2009
1301	27 Sep 2014	Fit engine ex 1604	

Locomotive Coal Supplies (p.202)

The last shipment of loco coal to Port Lincoln (1,513 tons) arrived on the MV *Yanderra* on 21 October 1967.²

Mortlock Renamed Edillilie (p.216)

The siding was opened with the line as Mortlock in 1907. The adjoining township was gazetted as Edillilie on 8 June 1908, and later that month the Resident Engineer (J.D. Somerville) suggested that the siding be renamed to match the town.

The Engineer-in-Chief advised the General Traffic Manager on 20 July that the name should be altered when the next timetable was issued (which would probably not be for some time).

Somerville advised Head Office on 5 October 1908 that as the carpenter was in the vicinity, the name had been changed that day!¹⁶

Polkdinney (p.223)

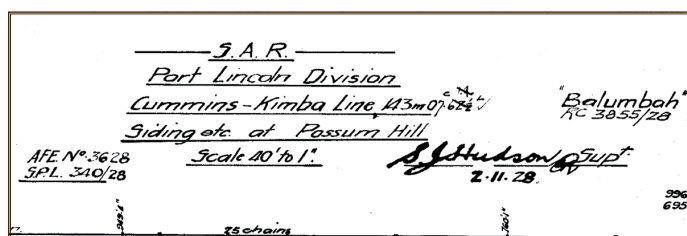
Commissioner of Public Works correspondence confirms that there was no siding known as Polkdinney. The Kyancutta name was assigned to the new siding constructed in that vicinity.¹⁷

Pygery (p.224)

The dead end extensions off both ends of the loop siding at Pygery were constructed to serve the prefabricated track panels depot which was established in the station yard for the main line relaying program.

Balumbah (p.238)

Maintenance barracks were erected at the future site of Balumbah when the line opened in 1913. The location was initially referred to simply as 143 Miles, and later as Possum Hill. The siding opened in 1929 was also known as Possum Hill until opening, when the Balumbah name was adopted.¹⁸



Kapinnie (p.242)

The siding extension carried out in 1968-69 was part of a scheme drawn up in 1966. The plans also included an additional short loop on the opposite side of the main line to the silos for superphosphate handling, and provision of a 53 ft turntable (the Kapinnie – Mount Hope section had closed in 1965, severing access to the triangle to turn T class). The second siding never eventuated, and diesels took over the Kapinnie workings in May 1969 thus removing any need for turning facilities.¹⁹

V Class 0-4-4WT (p.248)

V12 was the only one of its class to go to Port Lincoln, and the story of how it came to be there makes interesting reading. On 10 March 1909 the Superintendent (J.D. Somerville) suggested that a V class loco was needed for the next wheat season as ‘horse shunting is rather slow’.

V12 had been condemned in 1904 and was to have been scrapped, but the CME ordered that it be retained (although partially stripped) in case it was needed for the Port Broughton – Mundoora line. It was reinstated, and work began to return it to a trafficable condition for use at Port Lincoln.

On 20 May 1910 the new Superintendent (F.E. Hayman) wrote asking for an additional W class instead of the V, so that the loco could also do runs to Wanilla to bring in excess loading. The CME and the Traffic Manager denied the request, saying that a V was more appropriate in view of the imminent construction of line extensions and the consequent ‘heavy traffic in sleepers and rails’ which would result in much shunting. V12 duly arrived the following month.

An interesting episode in V12’s career occurred in 1919. The wheat ship *Alice* was loading at Port Lincoln when its boiler (presumably for a donkey engine driving its derrick cranes) failed. The SAR loaned the boiler from V12 to the ship from 12 June to 1 July. This was ‘without inconvenience to us’, meaning that the V wasn’t gainfully employed at the time.²⁰

V12 was not condemned until 1940. No information has yet come to light as to when it was last used in actual service.

Internal Combustion Loco 259 (p.255)

Another previously-unknown trial trip with loco 259 occurred on 1 April 1916. It was run at the request of Mr Molineux (from the CME’s office in Adelaide) and ran out about 1½ miles. On the return run, descending the grade into Port Lincoln yard, ‘both bearings gave way, the clutch broke and the centre and back axles bent and other minor damage done’. Rushton (the CME) advised on 26 April 1916 that the loco was to be dismantled, cased up and shipped to Port Adelaide.

Arrangements were later made to lift everything via the SS *Wandana* on 9 September 1916. Islington Workshops advised on 14 September 1916 that all parts of the loco were now located in the ‘new erecting shop’.²¹

830 Class (p.269)

847 was transferred to Port Lincoln from Whyalla on 16 July 2013.²²

NJ Class – the Saga of 1604 (p.272)

All six NJ class locos from the Commonwealth Railways' Marree–Alice Springs line came to Port Lincoln in 1981. Two (NJ2 and NJ5) left in 2003 and both eventually ended up in Western Australia with ARG. The other four (renumbered 1601, 1603, 1604 and 1606) soldiered on, spending most of their time on the gypsum trains operating out of Thevenard.

1604 has had an unfortunate career in recent years. After routine workshops attention at Port Lincoln it returned to Thevenard, and on its first run back on the gypsum train (30 July 2011) suffered a fire in its engine room. It was towed back to Port Lincoln, arriving on 10 August. After repairs and a partial repaint, it returned to service in late September 2011. Then in March 2012 it suffered a catastrophic internal engine failure while hauling the gypsum train. 850 towed it back to Port Lincoln on 24 March 2012. Its engine block went to Newport Workshops in Victoria for repairs, and it was almost a year before it returned to service (1 March 2013).

Kept close to Port Lincoln on grain trains, it was the victim of a shunting accident at Cummins on 11 April 2013; part of the cab was crushed. At the end of April it was taken by road to Port Augusta Workshops for evaluation. It sat there untouched for another year before being returned to Port Lincoln, a move related to GWA taking over the Port Lincoln Workshops from EDI.

Repairs were to take place as a low-priority task, but the reduction in grain train services on Eyre Peninsula meant that more locos than needed were at Port Lincoln, so work was suspended. It was then decided that the engine out of 1604 (which was in 'as new' condition prior to the shunting accident at Cummins in 2013) would be placed in MKA rebuild 1301 at Whyalla. 1301 arrived at Port Lincoln by road on 27 September 2014 and is currently having 1604's engine installed. The shell of 1604 is likely to be scrapped in the near future.²²

Below: 1204/850/873/846/1603 topping the grade into Coomunga with #2AE1 grain empties to Cummins, 3 March 2014. 1603 was on a 'shakedown run' after workshops attention.

900 Class (p.275)

902 was transferred to Port Lincoln from Whyalla on 18 June 2013. It spent most of its time on the gypsum train at Thevenard, before being returned to Whyalla on 20 May 2014.²²

Dort Motor Inspection Cars (p.294)

SAR records confirm that at least one Dort MIC was purchased for, and delivered to, Port Lincoln in 1923.²³

Toyota MIC-9 (p.298)

This was the last 'true' MIC at Port Lincoln. It was used intermittently for inspections up to 22 September 1983, when it ran to Kimba and return. Its next use was to Buckleboo and return on 11 October 1984 and to Penong and return on 15 October 1984, both days for the Area Manager to inspect the lines. It did not run after that.²⁴

ENFR Flat Wagons (p.317)

ENFR5 and ENFR6 had platform extensions welded along each side at the Port Lincoln workshops, and were dedicated to Gypsum Resources Australia for use between Thevenard and Kevin. GRA had a number of large front end loaders used at both locations, and these were moved between the sites as needed for repairs and to suit shipping needs.²⁵

ENFB and ENHS Wagons (pp.319, 325 & 334)

Flat wagon ENFB2 was fitted with racks for conveying wheelsets, and ENHS1 was equipped for conveying clean loco sand. They were used between Port Lincoln and Thevenard, supplying good wheelsets and loco sand to Thevenard and returning worn wheelsets to the Port Lincoln workshops. These movements ceased when AN began supplying Thevenard directly from Port Augusta by road.²⁵

AN Weed Spray Train (p.327)

When NPS7717 was created, the flow rate of the spray equipment was increased. This was to allow spraying to take place at up to 80 km/h.²⁵





Above: 850, the SAR's first narrow-gauge diesel-electric loco, was outshopped in June 2013 after a major overhaul and a repaint into GWA's current corporate colours. In this shot it is seen leading 873 and 1203 approaching Wanilla on 26 November 2013, still hard at work after 51 years. Since delivery in 1962 it has not left its home rails of the Port Lincoln Division.

Right: 906/873/1203 are seen departing Port Lincoln on 30 April 2014. This was the last run for the dual-service HBN hoppers, six of which have been gathered at the front of the train so that they can be shunted off and stored on their return. From 1 May 2014 a single grain rake has operated, including only HAN and HCN grain hoppers.

Both: Peter Knife



References for new material

1. CPW 2012/14 in State Records GRG23/1. *Daily Herald*, 13 Dec 1915. *Register*, 10 Jan 1916. SAWS 96/20 in State Records GRG24/45. GTM 4489/21 and GTM 245/22 in State Records GRG42/2.
2. *Port Lincoln Shipping 1954-80*, Register in EPRPS Archives.
3. *Port Lincoln Times*, 26 Jun 1936, 15 Jan 1937, 6 May 1954 and 27 May 1954.
4. *Port Lincoln Times*, 18 Jan 1951.
5. Temp STNs 1/68 and 2/68.
6. Commissioner's Inspection Tour information folder.
7. ARG TNs for 2005-2006 in EPRPS Archives.
8. Port Lincoln *Docket Registers* in EPRPS Archives.
9. *West Coast Recorder*, 22 May 1912.
10. *Port Lincoln Times*, 21 Jun 1929.
11. *Port Lincoln Times*, 1 Mar 1935.
12. Shop Order 664, 1968.
13. *Advertiser*, 17 Jan 1951. *Port Lincoln Times*, 18 Jan 1951, 14 Jun 1951, 8 Nov 1951.
14. Port Lincoln *Docket Registers* in EPRPS Archives. AsFE 46, 695 and 6483.
15. Port Lincoln rail weights diagrams for 1966, 1967, 1969, 1972, 1973 and 1974.
16. EO 2076/08 in State Records GRG53/16.
17. CPW 788/15 in State Records GRG23/1.
18. WN 6/18 #17. WN 38/26 #22. Master yard diagram.
19. Yard diagram.
20. CME 1165/09 and 2680/19 in State Records GRS/7867.
21. CME 1898/16 and 5531/21 in State Records GRS/7867.
22. Peter Knife notes.
23. AFE 12.
24. File in EPRPS Archives.
25. D. O'Leary interview.