



SteamRanger's Heritage - an insight into our past

BACKGROUND

An historic railway enthusiast's three day excursion from Adelaide northwards to Terowie, Gladstone, Wilmington, Gladstone, Pt. Pirie, Peterborough, Broken Hill, Peterborough, Eurelia, Terowie and back to Adelaide, all in three days.

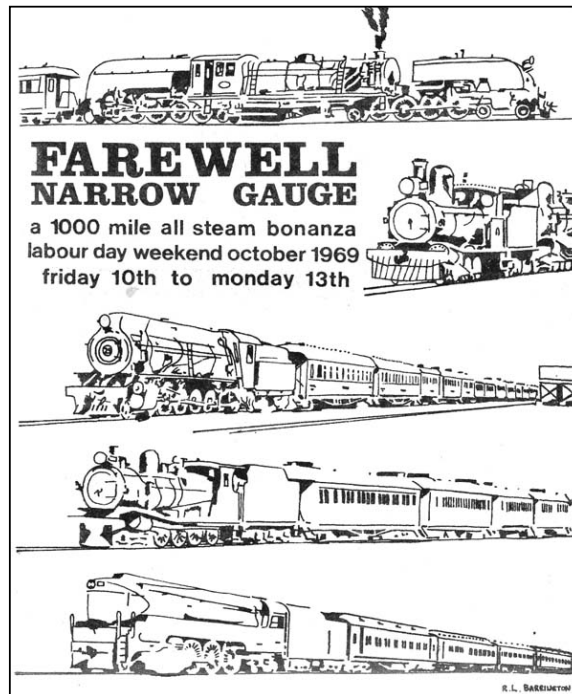
The event marked the impending end of narrow gauge SAR services on the northern lines brought about by the standardisation of the east west interstate main line

FAREWELL NARROW GAUGE

Friday, October 10 - Monday, October 13, 1969

ARHS Recorder June October 1969 pages 5 to 10

Compiled by Ivan Marchant with assistance from various sources



Tour brochure promoting the excursion

The proposed timetable as included in the on-train passenger's guidebook

<u>"FAREWELL NARROW GAUGE"</u>			
<u>FRIDAY, 10th OCTOBER, 1969</u>		<u>TO</u>	<u>MONDAY, 13th OCTOBER, 1969</u>
<u>TIME TABLE</u>			
<u>Friday October 10th</u>			
Adelaide	Dep.	7.35 p.m.	<u>Power:</u> 526
Terowie	Arr.	11.23 p.m.	<u>Load:</u> 501, 751, 753, 701, 715, 503, Dining Car, CD2.
Terowie	Dep.	12.00 Midnight	<u>Power:</u> 400 Class
			<u>Load:</u> GB, Coonatto, 470, 304, 403, Morambro, Accident Sleeper 5082, 301, 408, 401, 407, 400, Baroota, Sturt, 351, 144, Light, Alberga, 390, 405, Accident Sleeper 24, Accident Sleeper 18, G. B.
<u>Saturday October 11th</u>			
Gladstone	Arr.	3.00 a.m.	<u>Power:</u> Double header T class Gladstone to
	Dep.	3.32 "	Wilmington and
Wilmington	Arr.	8.44 "	return 400 Class
	Dep.	9.15 "	Gladstone to Port
Gladstone	Arr.	12.28 p.m.	Pirie and return -
	Dep.	12.45 "	T and 400 Class
Port Pirie	Arr.	2.00 "	Gladstone to
	Dep.	3.00 "	Peterborough.
Peterborough	Arr.	6.48 "	<u>Load:</u> As from Terowie.

<u>Sunday October 12th</u>			
Peterborough	Dep.	4.25 a.m.	<u>Power:</u> 400 Class Peterborough to Cockburn
Cockburn	Arr.	1.15 p.m.	and return; T and 400
	Dep.	1.50 "	Class Double header
Broken Hill	Arr.	4.10 "	Cockburn to Broken
	Dep.	9.30 "	Hill and return.
Cockburn	Arr.	11.00 "	<u>Load:</u> As above - except
	Dep.	11.40 "	sleeping car Nilpena
			will be added to rear
			of consist on the down
			journey and one G.B.
			will be taken from
			front of train. W class
			will be attached
			immediately in front
			of first car on return
			journey.
<u>Monday October 13th</u>			
Peterborough	Arr.	9.43 a.m.	<u>Power:</u> Peterborough to Eurelia,
	Dep.	10.45 "	Y class and T class
Eurelia	Arr.	12.35 p.m.	double headed. Eurelia
	Dep.	1.10 "	to Terowie, single T
Peterborough	Arr.	2.37 "	<u>Load:</u> Peterborough to Eurelia
	Dep.	2.50 "	and return to Terowie
Terowie	Arr.	3.40 "	301, 408, 401, 407,
	Dep.	4.15 "	400, Baroota, Sturt, 351,
			144, Light, Alberga,
			390, 405, G. B.
Adelaide	Arr.	8.22 "	<u>Power:</u> Terowie to Adelaide
			526.
			<u>Load:</u> 501, Dining Car, 503,
			715, 701, 753, 751,
			CD2.

Friday 10th

The party of 230 left Adelaide at 7.40 p.m. on Friday in 6 steel cars, dining car 'Adelaide' and CD brake van, with 526 up front. The special Fokker Friendship plane from Melbourne arrived at 7.00 p.m. but the loss of two passenger's luggage caused a five minute late departure of the train from Adelaide. "Cannonball" driver Alan Neale was equal and better to the occasion and even though our late departure and stops en route were responsible for 18 minutes more than the schedule allowed, we arrived 2 minutes early at Terowie (11.21p.m.). Adverse grades are virtually continuous from Gawler to Hallett, a distance of 95 miles, and our 3 hour 6 minute running time (stops excluded) gave the very creditably average running speed of 45.1 m.p.h.

Our 23 car narrow gauge train was marshalled alongside the island platform at Terowie with 401 at the head quietly waiting for the all clear. At 12.05 a.m. on Saturday, a sudden jolt of the carriage indicated that 401 had taken up the slack and we were on our way. The late hour did not deter many enthusiasts from staying up all night to listen to the music a la Garratt.

Saturday 11th

At 3.11 a.m. in Gladstone yards, 401 was replaced by T251 and T240 which took the 1/4 mile long 450 ton train to Wilmington. The syncopated rhythm of double header T's as they pulled defiantly out of Wirrabara at 4.15 a.m. on the Saturday morning, their shrill whistles challenging the level crossing, was music to the awakening travellers. The early morning fog began to lift as we approached Melrose at 6.17a.m. for breakfast. The food was so good. Mr. Young certainly knows how to cater for hungry souls like us! During our 1 hour 24 minute breakfast stop, we all saw a remarkable sight - Mt. Remarkable with the golden strains of early morning sun lighting its bold features and the pleasant surroundings, including T251 and T240. A photo stop was made between Melrose and Terka with the colourful Salvation Jane flowering among green paddocks and towering gums. Another stop was made before an 8.41 a.m. arrival at Wilmington. The consist had to be broken at Wilmington so that both locos could use the triangle. Six cars were placed on the next road while the leading loco T251 turned, watered, and coupled up to allow T240 to lead back to Gladstone. Departure from Wilmington at 9.21 a.m. was 6 minutes behind schedule due to the extra movement. Three photo stops were made on the Wilmington-Gladstone section, one just before Melrose and another between Melrose and Peroomba, arriving Booleroo Centre at 10.04 a.m.

The third photo stop was a few miles after Yandiah at the highest point of the line. A fine sight from the hill slopes of double header T's making the ascent with our long train.

12.36 p.m. and a change of scenery at Gladstone; the T's were replaced by 401 for the run to Pt. Pirie. After a 22 minute stop and a side by side photo in Gladstone 3 gauge yards, we arrived at Port Pirie at 2.20 p.m. averaging 23.4 m.p.h. for the non stop run. We had quite a bonanza at Pt. Pirie for, in addition to 404, the engine to be used for our return to Peterborough, class leader No. 400 was reposing there still in steam. A few words in the right quarters and soon all three Garratts were lined up side by side for the photographers. How long is it since three of this class could be photographed together and in steam at Port Pirie?

Departing Port Pirie 7 minutes late at 3.07 p.m., 404 idled along over the restricted speed sections to Warnertown and then dug her toes in with the familiar 400 roar as we accelerated up the grade towards Crystal Brook. There we crossed diesel 862 on a down freight and made an unscheduled stop for water before proceeding towards Gladstone, enjoying two photo stops en route taken from the vantage point of the high standard gauge embankment. Arrival at Gladstone was 41 minutes down and so the photo stop scheduled for the next section was taken in Gladstone yards as we departed with T251 coupled to 404 for Peterborough at 5.45 p.m.

As the sun sank in the west, a brake shoe on car 301 became locked and delayed the train 10 minutes near Yongala. Our arrival of 7.55 pm. at Peterborough was 1 hour 7 minutes behind schedule. Meal and shower arrangements had to be altered, but after everyone had satisfied their hunger and freshened up with a shower, most passengers slept soundly until 4.25 a.m. Sunday when Engineman Ken Stokes on 402 eased his big train ever so smoothly out of Peterborough on the start of the run to Broken Hill.

Sunday 12th

Breakfast was served at 7.00 a.m. Sunday at the Yunta Hotel, opposite the station yards. A warm bright morning left us in no doubt that we were in for a good day. 404 pulled out at 8.13 a.m., 17 mins. early, and the first photo stop for the day was crossing the bridge just out of Yunta. Water at Mannahill, Olary, Mingary and three photo stops later, we arrived Cockburn at 1.25 p.m. The shunt loco T243 was coupled in front of 402 for the Cockburn-Broken Hill section. S.T.C. crews worked the two locos with an S.A.R. Loco Inspector in attendance. Once again the Historical Society was responsible for the historic occasion of the never-before, never-again "T" and Garratt working into Broken Hill.

Three photo stops on the S.T.Co.line, a pause at Silverton and our train arrived Broken Hill at 4.25 p.m. From the number of people observing the passage of our train into The Hill, one would think they were greeting Royalty. Cars were bumper to bumper in places with three or four people in most cars. The whistles from both engines and the sound of many car horns added to our grand arrival. T243 cut off and waited on the passing siding while 402 drew the train forward so that the "T" could couple to the rear of the train. The consist then moved back to Railway Town for servicing. Most passengers, made an inspection of W25 and Silverton Tramway Co. loco depot relics at Railway Town. When the new standard gauge line is completed next year, most of the Railway Town yard will disappear.

At 9.00 p.m., Sulphide Street station was crowded to witness the floodlit presentation by the General Manager of S.T.Co., Mr. Roberts, of W25 to the Society. It was no ordinary ceremony. Mr. Roberts was sad at the thought of losing his prize loco but delighted that W25 was being presented for posterity and we were more than happy to be the recipients. Our president, Ken Whicker responded on behalf of the Society and presented Mr. Roberts with our 500 and 700 books bound together, some of our work in return for his company's locomotive.

Mr. Roberts presented Dean Harvey with a makers plate from engine A18 effectively mounted on an ironbark sleeper taken from the S.T.C. main line to show his appreciation to Dean for organising the tour. In case you are not aware the "Farewell Narrow Gauge" tour took six months continuous work and planning to be the success it was.

The ceremony over, farewells made, and we departed Broken Hill at 9.33 p.m. Sunday night. Most people thought our surprises were all over but there were still more to come. Two months ago an oil burning T was sent to Cockburn to work the shunt specifically to reduce the 12,000 gallons of oil storage to save last minute removal after standardisation. Sufficient oil was left so it was thought for working our train at the Labour Day weekend. However, on return to Cockburn from Broken Hill a mere 450 gallons of oil was all that could be obtained. It was obvious that 402 would not reach Peterborough with its 525 ton load with this small amount of fuel. Arrangements were therefore made for 404 to be sent to Paratoo to double head back to Peterborough.

Monday 13th

At Paratoo early Monday morning, unknown to sleeping passengers, 404 quietly coupled to 402 whose oil reserve was below 400 gallons. Departing at 5.49 a.m., word quickly spread by grape vine through the train that we had Garratts double heading up front and upon arrival at Nackara, about 50 enthusiasts were out to photograph the spectacle. The deafening roar of Australia's noisiest engines, the 400 class Beyer Garratts, as they double-headed at a pre-breakfast photo stop at 179 ¼ miles near Peechara was an unforgettable sound and a grand sight. As the train was almost stopped after the photo run, there was a terrific jerk, thought to be due to loss of air in the front part of the train and while the rear portion remained firmly braked, the front part wrenched ahead.

This was just too much for the rear drawgear of Accident Sleeper No. 5082 which came adrift complete with the elegant verandah above. No chance of fixing this mess so what were we to do? After 15 minutes deliberation, all passengers except selected watch dogs boarded the front section and proceeded to Peechara for a hearty breakfast. While passengers were satisfying their wants the three locos proceeded with the front part of the train including No. 5082 to Oodla Wirra arriving 8.23 a.m. Here, movements were made so quickly that most people were dumb-founded at the speed with which the crews worked. 404 uncoupled, took water and went back to rescue the stranded passengers and carriages at 8.35 a.m. 402 took water and proceeded light engine to Peterborough. W25 (not in steam of course) was left in charge of the front section. Some of the passengers had walked the 1 1/2 miles

back to the stranded cars so that when 404 arrived, it coupled up and immediately drew forward to the breakfast stop. After allowing 2 minutes to pick up the remaining passengers, 404 headed for Oodla Wirra. After remarshalling the train, departure at 10.02 a.m. was 1 hour 12 minutes down. A non stop run to Peterborough picked up 12 minutes to be 1 hour late, arriving at 10.43 a.m.

Y97 and T211 were waiting in the yard to couple to their load of 14 cars which was formed from part of our 21 carriages ex Broken Hill. That marvellous veteran Y97, all decked out in new paint, signalled our departure for Eurelia with its distinctive S.T.C. whistle at 11.11 a.m., only 26 minutes down. Photo stops were as scheduled at Black Rock bridge, and two in the Walloway Hills at 184 ½ m. and 187 ½ m. Y97 was painted out in black livery and had its correct tender. The tender normally used at Peterborough loco is shorter so that Y97 and a T class can fit on the turntable. Walloway Hills was a fitting place for the last narrow gauge photo stop. The usually deserted Eurelia Station was full of people and cars who had come to greet us. After reversing the brake van, T44 departed Eurelia at 1.26 p.m., 16 minutes down and ran express to Peterborough so that arrival there at 2.42 p.m. was 4 minutes down. In five hours we had made up 68 minutes and had all but two scheduled photo stops. T44 continued on to Terowie, departing Peterborough at 2.55 p.m. and arriving Terowie at 3.41 pm.

Terowie looked as if the clock was put back 15 years with steam trains either side of the platform, another set of broad gauge cars waiting to be marshalled, and people busy changing their luggage from one train to the other. Refreshment services on the platform were doing brisk trade while the staff of "Adelaide" were busy preparing the evening meal. 526 with its six bright steel cars and CD brake van departed Terowie at 4.16 p.m. on the last section of the steam bonanza. Most of the motor cars following the train had difficulty in keeping up with the 'Duchess'. A four minute stop was made at Whyte-Yarcowie for a standing photo. Then, at 4.30 p.m. the rods began to roll for Riverton, only to stop twice for staff purposes. The crew must have appreciated the twilight conditions because our 6.12 p.m. arrival at Riverton cut five minutes off the schedule. After refreshments, departure was at 6.50 p.m., two minutes down.

A stop was made at Tarlee for staff exchange and then a cross with the Down Terowie passenger at Hamley Bridge before a magnificent non stop run to Adelaide. After clearing restricted speed sections at Dry Creek, 526 made a memorable dash over the last 6 1/2 miles to Adelaide, arriving at 8.23 p.m.

Every minute of this three day trip was full of interest and thanks are due to the S.A.R. and S.T. Company for their co-operation.