

SteamRanger's Heritage

- an insight into our past

Victor Harbor with two ten wheelers

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BACKGROUND

This excursion, run as a charter some ten years prior to the formal closure of the line by AN and the consequent establishment of the Victor Harbour Tourist Railway, marked the first time that the ARHS had operated double headed Rx class locos right through to Goolwa

Around 1910 an express headed by Rx locos made it to Victor from Adelaide in just under 3 hours.

This file contains the full text of the article, but omits one photograph

The first double headed Rx tour for the 1974 season was to Victor on Saturday 11/5. At 8.20am the drivers opened their regulators and the engines moved off to begin 11 hrs. of steam railroading.

A steady slog through Eden Hills was followed by a stop for water at Blackwood. While we were there rail-car 411 worked through as train # 311 on its way to Belair.

It set its passengers down on the up platform then crossed back to the down line in time to allow an up goods to come through (confused?). This goods normally reaches Mile End around 7.00am and it was now about two hours late.

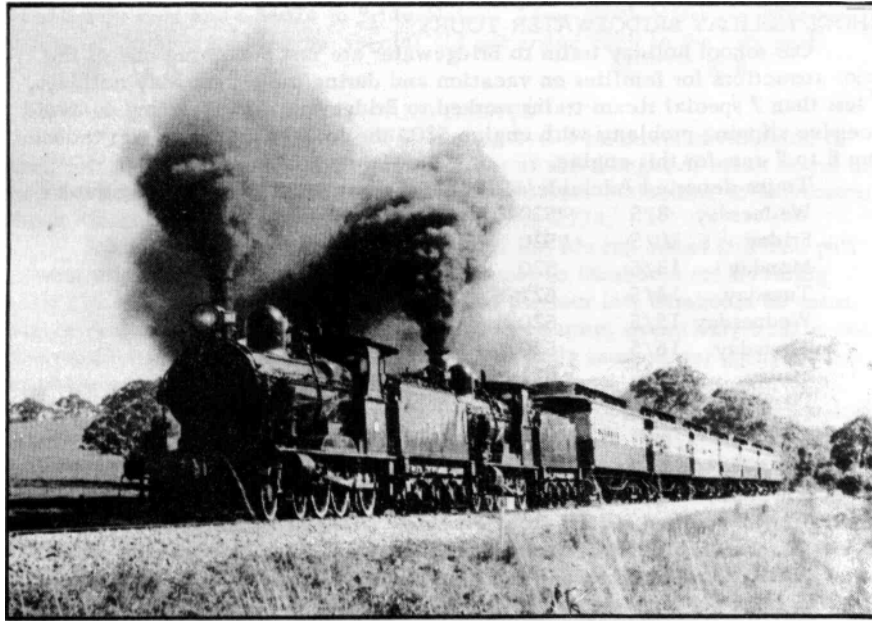


Watering completed we moved on although at a slower pace through Glenalta where we crossed up Jet # 198 due into Mile End at 8.00am. After a signal check at Belair we came to a stand in the island platform road. Car 411 was now in # 4 road. After a short delay a 19 car Overland rolled through - yes that's right, one more than usual maximum. With track clear we accelerated toward Fosters Corner and the grades ahead. A clear run through Long Gully and on to Mt. Lofty where we stopped in # 3 road. A few minutes later the down Victor passenger entered # 2 road from behind us then # 310 2nd division Overland came into view with ten cars headed by a 930-tS30 set. The Blue Birds departed amid much smoke as the brakes on the rear bogie of 254 appeared reluctant to release.

A short stop at Aldgate allowed us to cross the up Victor pass with 858-3 steels-CD van then we went on to Bridgewater and our first photo stop. This was held while we waited for the line ahead to clear. The up Tailern passenger came through with a 930-car-van. From here we took an effortless run to Mt. Barker where the water column was persuaded to operate.

Next stop was at the foot of the grade going down from Philcox Hill Station. The two Rx's worked hard to push their seven car load up the grade as tape recorders captured the slips. Down the hill with rods clanking then open up along the straight toward the photo line. This lengthy stop put us well behind the clock and so a good run was on the cards. The fans were not disappointed as we had a fast exhilarating run from Strathalbyn to Goolwa.

Engine Rx207 was detached to work a later special and old copper top 224 went on to Victor. The inevitable photo stop beside the water was followed by a triumphant entry into Victor. Here the train was invaded by nearly 400 locals for a return trip to Goolwa. The engine ran around, turned and watered (courtesy of the local E. F. S.)



The two engines approach the photo line at Philcox Hill. Photo: Roger Billett

"All aboard", green flag then we're off to Goolwa. The atmosphere on this trip was kids, excitement, kids, smoke and more kids. On arrival at Goolwa little time was wasted while 224 was replaced by 207 for the return. A similar run to Victor with the superheated engine which was then turned and watered.

With the engine up front once again we departed slightly late with the ARHS tour and 224 was added at Goolwa to trail 207 as the front engine makes the pace for a double header and 207 is the better runner of the two. A photo stop in fading light over the Currency Creek bridge was followed by a fast run to Strath where a petrol tanker had to be shunted out of the way before the engines could take water. In the yard was a Y truck loaded for Middleton. Judging by the grooves leading away from a derailer it was delayed en route.

We stormed out of Strath in near darkness and the two low drivered old timers clipped ten minutes off the schedule to Bugle Ranges in a run that defies description. Philcox Hill was climbed at a speed as though we were on the level and we were into Mt. Barker. From here the rest of the trip was an anticlimax. Crossed a goods at Balhannah and the down T.B. 858-steel-CD at Long Gully. An 18 car Overland was seen near Eden Hills as we rattled down the hill. This trip surprised a few people as it arrived 2 mins early in Adelaide at 7.50pm. That's right - a train from Victor arrived EARLY.

A special thanks to the four crews that worked the two engines under the supervision of Loco Inspector Paddy Brooks.