

The Cockle Train - 10th May 1975

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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, repeated a similar trip in 1974 which marked the first time that the ARHS had operated double headed Rx class locos right through to Goolwa

Interestingly, the excursion was promoted as "The Cockle Train" a name subsequently used by SteamRanger to brand the local service between Goolwa and Victor.

The Victor Harbour line is one of the most interesting, both scenically and historically, in Australia and our steam tours to the South Coast are always popular.

On Saturday, 10th May 1975, **Rx 207 and 224** hauling baggage - 4 steel cars - GB4074 pulled out of Adelaide at 8.33am bound for Goolwa. Here 140 passengers alighted and joined the newest (and largest ever) vessel on the river, the MV "Murray River Queen", for a trip to Point McLeay and return.

A sumptuous buffet dinner was served aboard and really made the journey something to remember.

Meanwhile, Rx 207 was detached at Goolwa and 224 dashed across to Victor Harbour to be turned and take water. About 150 locals joined at Victor for the trip back to Goolwa where 224 was exchanged for 207 for the return to Victor.

While 207 was similarly turned and watered, the afternoon train from Adelaide arrived with cars 256-260.

Leaving Victor at 4.30pm, we returned to Goolwa where 224 was attached for the trip home. Passengers also saw the "Murray River Queen" return about 6.00pm in the twilight and after the Up passenger from Victor Harbour had passed, we left Goolwa for Strathalbyn. There was some delay here as the outlet valve from the overhead tank was blocked and it was decided to run to Mt. Barker for water.

After topping up the tenders, we marched up to Mt. Lofty in traditional style before dropping down the ranges to Adelaide. Ray Polkinghorne from "The Advertiser" was a guest of the Society on this tour and gave the day a glowing report in his column.

