

# SteamRanger's Heritage

- an insight into our past

## FESTIVAL OF STEAM - STEAMRANGER TOURS

### ADELAIDE RAILWAY STATION

SUNDAY, 21st MAY, 1978

ARHS Recorder June 1978, pages 131 to 137

#### 1. A personal viewpoint from Kaye Worsfold

The day started with a trip over the Hilton Bridge to witness the beautiful sight of engines 520. 621 and Rx224 steaming up at Mile End at 0845 hrs. The sun was shining and the weather forecast looked good for the rest of the day.

At Adelaide Railway Station the S.A. Railway Modellers Association members were already unloading and setting up their display in the Marble Hall at the Ground Floor level. The old railway confectionary shop at the platform level was arranged as the nerve centre for the Festival of Steam. Steam Ranger Tours souvenir sales section used part of the luggage area as its base; the remaining area was given over to a large display of model live steam locomotives set up by members of the Adelaide Miniature Steam Railway Society of Regency Road, Islington.

Curious people who were waiting for the arrival of the Overland (which was running late on this morning) inspected the half-finished displays. As 1000 hrs. approached the souvenirs were temporarily removed to allow the baggage to be distributed to passengers from Melbourne.



621 and 520 arrive at Adelaide for the Festival of Steam (Murray Billett)

Early arrivals for the Festival were asking whether they could book for a 1035 hrs. steam run to Woodville (no such train was scheduled nor did it run). The queues began to form to buy steam train tickets to Woodville and Penfield and the first roster of ticket sellers took up their positions.

Unfortunately there were no signs to indicate which queue to join the Penfield and Woodville trains. The 1400 hrs. trains were quickly booked out - many people had already waited for some hours to catch the first train. Harrassed ticket sellers did brisk business selling tickets, promoting Steam Ranger trips, directing people to displays, and to the ticket boxes for regular trains to Expo, which was being held at the Wayville Showground, and Noarlunga Centre.

Some lucky workers had time for lunch. The S.T.A. were underprepared for the large crowds wanting food and drinks. Some people were content with cold pies and pasties, while the more affluent were able to enjoy a delicious smorgasbord or grill in the Dining Room. Others queued in the sunshine outside the Festival Centre kiosk for pasties and cold coffee.



Rx224 arrives at Adelaide with Vice Regal Train (Phil Butler)

At 1330 hrs. the Governor Mr K. D. Seaman, arrived aboard the Vice-Regal train powered by Rx224. The official opening ceremony commenced amidst some confusion in the arrangement of the ribbon. Cameras whirred and clicked. Engine 520 puffed and panted as it waited to start on the inaugural Steam Ranger trip, and the S.A.Railways Institute Band played "Congratulations". Car Captains, looking glamorous in their distinctive green and gold waistcoats, shepherded their passengers into the trains. And an afternoon of continuous steam runs commenced.

Level crossings and other vantage points attracted many curious and happy spectators along the three lines where the tours ran. Large crowds thronged the Adelaide Railway Station concourse; the quiet Sunday afternoon emptiness of other days seemed far away. The steam bus trips proved popular. Afternoon tea was served in the 50 year old "Adelaide" dining car. Engine Rx207 was a stationary exhibit.

Engine Rx224 steamed back and forth to Woodville. All went smoothly until the fourth trip. Rx224 had uncoupled from the consist at Woodville station and was waiting for the signal to allow it to run around the train for the return journey. We waited and waited. There was no movement; the signals had failed. Approximately 30 minutes later, a fitter arrived to repair the broken wire. Train passengers were very understanding about the delay as Red-Hens banked up at either end of the yard.

As the sun went down, the signal was fixed and the train returned to Adelaide. (ARHS members wondered whether the presence of Bob Green and Kevin Rogers had anything to do with the signal breakdown. They had taken time off from their other duties at Adelaide to ride this particular trip). Regrettably the fourth trip was further marred for passengers when a rock was thrown through a carriage window. A passenger was slightly injured.

A small number of enthusiastic passengers, including many of the ARHS workers, rode the last steam train to Woodville in darkness. The day finished at 1830 hrs. with the volunteer ticket sellers, car captains, souvenir sellers and other ARHS members who contributed to the success of the day enjoying refreshments and swapping stories about the days events in the "Adelaide" Dining Car.

For the workers it had been an exhausting but fun day. Steam Ranger tours had really made their presence felt in Adelaide and suburbs. Excellent television and media coverage of the event was also obtained.



Part of the large crowds who came to admire the three engines in steam  
(Murray Billett)

## 2. A Postscript from John Ramsay

On the 21/5/78 between 1200 and 1830 hours 9 train movements, powered by steam engines, departed from Adelaide Railway Station. The first train to leave was the official train powered by Rx224 and consisting of the Vice-Regal car and the car Murray, both observation ends trailing. After the official opening the two cars were shunted to Platform 11 for display. Dining car "Adelaide" and wooden sleeping car "Finnis" were also on display.

The inaugural SteamRanger train to Bndgewater departed at 1357 hrs. behind 520 with red-painted steel cars 501, 715, 706, 709 and COP 621 hauled the first Penfield train which comprised cars 345, 714, 712, 704, 703, 702, 701, 484, 446 and 412 and departed at 1400 hrs. The first of the Woodville trains departed with Rx224 running tender first and cars 428, 462, 433, 326, 338, 317, 336 and 426 as the load. It was due to depart at 1400 hrs but was delayed a few minutes and so prevented the advertised sight of three steam trains leaving together from the station yard for different destinations.

After 621 arrived back at Adelaide with the first of the two Penfield trams the cars were removed from the platform by the extra 500 class shunter which the ANR had rostered to work the Adelaide shunt. After 621 was released from the platform it proceeded to No 14 road and then was turned on the turntable adjacent to Platform 13. The second Penfield tram departed shortly after 1600 hrs. Woodville departures were timed for 1445, 1530, 1615 and 1705 hrs. but the signal failure at Woodville caused the last Woodville train to depart shortly after 1800 hours.

An estimated 10,000 people attended the Festival and in excess of 4,000 train tickets were sold



520 turns south for Bridgewater whilst 621 whistles past on its way to Penfield (Phil Butler)



621 starts the second train to Penfield out of Adelaide (Phil Butler)

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