



SteamRanger's Heritage - an insight into our past

BACKGROUND

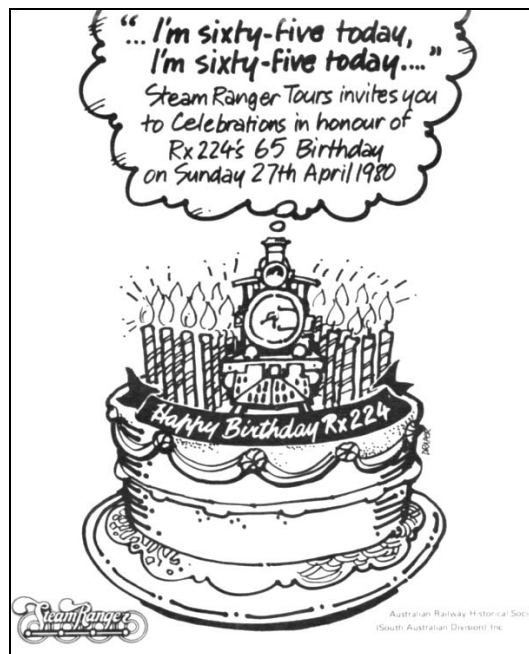
On 27th April 1980 the ARHS ran a special steam tour to coincide with the 65th birthday of steam locomotive Rx224..

The train arrived into Adelaide station with a large birthday cake on a flat wagon. After suitable ceremony the passengers were taken on a tour to Tonsley and Outer Harbor

Rx 224 65th BIRTHDAY PARTY

27 April 1980

ARHS Recorder May 1980 page 130



On 27/4/80 the ARHS ran a special steam tour to coincide with the 65th birthday of steam locomotive Rx224.

The R class of locomotive was introduced by the South Australian Railways in 1886 to cater for the railway's need for an engine to haul the ever increasing loads on the Hills sections of the Intercolonial Railway. The design is credited to William Thow, Locomotive Engineer for the SAR for several years prior to going to New South Wales to take up a similar position.

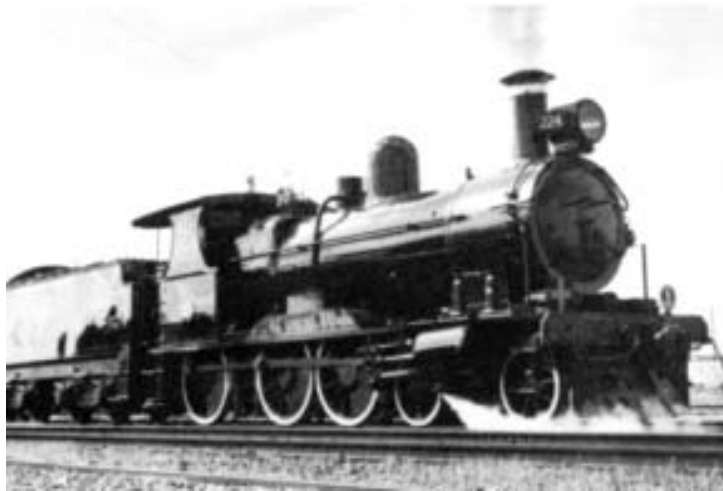
The first batch of 6 locomotives were built in Scotland by Messrs. Dubs and Company and entered service between February and June 1886. A further 24 were built by James Martin and Son at Gawler between 1890 and 1895. In 1899 R146 was altered by the provision of a larger type boiler with a Belpaire firebox and emerged from Islington as the more powerful Rx class. The remaining 29 members of the class were converted to Rx class between 1900 and 1911 as their boilers came up for renewal. A further 54 of the Rx design of locomotive were built between 1909 and 1916 at Islington, North British Locomotive Company in Scotland and by Walkers of Maryborough, Queensland. Walkers locomotive number 252 was numbered Rx224 by the SAR and entered service on 27/4/1915 and was part of an order for 25 placed with the Queensland company.

The Rx class enjoyed considerable success over all SAR broad gauge lines and two of the class were rostered to work the Down Overland every night with a third engine banking between Mile End and Mount Lofty. They were relegated to lesser duties with the arrival of Mr. Webb's big engines in the 1920's.

Rx's are the most preserved class in South Australia with 7 being placed in local parks, Rx93 in the Mile End Railway Museum and 207 and 224 in near-running and running condition at Dry Creek.

The birthday train on 27/4/80 departed Dry Creek at 1300 hrs. for Adelaide with a birthday "cake" mounted on an AFFA flat top wagon next to the locomotive and cars 81, 66, 65, 73, 56, 72, 83 and 60. Upon arrival at Adelaide and after shunting movements had been completed, Society President, G. Bowes, Tours Manager, D. Harvey and the Society's Patron and Chairman of the State Transport Authority, Mr. A. Flint spoke to the assembled persons.

Mr. Flint cut the "cake" and a piece was ceremoniously fed to the locomotive through the firebox door. Mr. Harvey read a telegram that had been received from the makers of the engine, Walkers Ltd., wishing the Society well in the continued maintenance and operation of the engine. The afternoon's activities concluded with a run behind the locomotive to Tonsley and Outer Harbor before returning to Dry Creek via Adelaide.



Rx224

Photo: Roger Currie