



## SteamRanger's Heritage - an insight into our past

BACKGROUND

Throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s the ARHS tours organisers programmed an annual "Mystery Trip" to locations around both the metropolitan and near country rail lines.

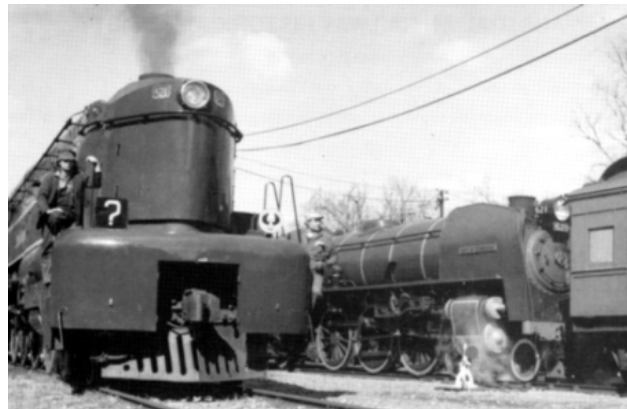
Details of the destinations, motive power and attractions were carefully guarded and railway employees warned to not divulge any information to enquirers.

This report describes a typical excursion  
This file contains the full text of the article, but omits one photograph.

### THE 1991 MYSTERY TRIP

*ARHS Recorder* September 1991 pages 188,189

Reported by Brian Busch



520 and 621 at Bridgewater on the 11th September.  
The destination board on 520 indicates that this was the running of the Mystery Tour  
Photo: G Doecke

It gets harder and harder to find a destination or something different to do for the annual Mystery trip and this year's one was no different. When we first started to think about what we could do changes brought about by the new STA signalling system gave the ready answer

Engine 520 hauling 1/BE, 1/600, baggage 83 and 3 centenaries departed Dry Creek at 8.35am bound for A.N.'s Keswick Terminal followed closely behind by engine 621 hauling 5 centenaries and baggage. As 520 pulled into the platform at Keswick there were some long faces as passengers looked for cars 7 to 12 inclusive not being aware of the following movement, but their concern was short lived as 621 come in behind the first consist.

At 10.00am 520 whistled out of the Terminal and headed south, over the cross-over at Goodwood and along the down south main. Looking back as the train slowly made its way up towards Hawthorn the head light of 621 could be clearly seen then suddenly it was realised it is on the other track.

621 had been signalled onto the Up main at Millswood under the new STA bi-directional signalling system. As 621 came along side the 520's consist and pulled ahead, 520 started to march off and then pass 621 - this process continued to Sleeps Hill tunnel where 621 run through first to be followed by 520.

Further zig zagging took place with the lead changing as the trains ran through the twin tunnels at Eden Hills. All too soon Blackwood came into sight and the end of bi-directional working. 520 ran through and continued onto Belair while 621 crossed over onto the down main on signal clearance and followed.

On arrival at Bridgewater 520's train came to a stand on the main line while 520 was cut-off to turn. While this was taking place 621 and its train arrived and took the back road. Once 520 had left the turntable and proceeded back onto its train 621 took its turn on the table. In the meantime 520 picked up its cars and shunted them onto the 621 consist on the back road.

621 was then "tucked in" between the lead car and 520 and the train departed double-header tender first. Through Balhannah - rule that out as the destination - and up to Mt.Barker Jet - as the train took the turnout the cries of "it's Mt.Barker" were heard. Yes Mt.Barker was the destination of the Mystery trip.

While the Oakbank Kindergarten group looked after the hunger of the passengers the train was smartly remarshalled with 520 heading the first train out with 606, BE, 3 centenaries and baggage while 621 stayed behind with the remaining cars. It was interesting to hear the comments of some about the destination. One group of 6 were within a few metres of home whilst the VHTR Track Gang who were having a day out on the train suddenly realised why Graham and Michelle Bull had been somewhat evasive the day before - Michelle had arranged the BBQ whilst Graham was running the road to ensure its safe passage for the train.

At 2.35pm 520 departed with its consist while 621 waited patiently for a train order clearance at the Junction. 520 marched quickly up to Bridgewater where it came to a halt. 621 followed with its train and on arrival at Bridgewater stopped while the engine was cut-off and run to the front of 520 via the back road. 520 then pushed its consist back onto the cars from 621 and after the two engines were coupled it was off to Mt.Lofty.

It is believed that this was the first running of double-headed big steam power over this section of track with the exception of one previous movement some time ago where two 520's were at the front of a passenger train due to the failure of an air compressor on one, but the load of that train was light compared to the load behind 621 and 520.

A few minutes early at 4.45pm the train arrived back at Keswick Terminal the end of this year's excellent 'Mystery Special'.