

BR Brake Van World Tour 14

Adelaide January 2026

Authors: John Boyson & Andrew Emmett



The brake van with Rx 207 at Middleton on the Cockle Train run by SteamRanger (the operating arm of the Australian Railway Historical Society in South Australia).

Following the departure of the brake van from NZ to Australia, there has been a bit of a gap in reporting on its travels. However, I am pleased to advise that it has now returned to NZ and is in the safe care of Andrew Bishop in Christchurch in the South Island who will be reporting on its activities going forward.

In the meantime, there is the small matter of its time in Australia. This can be broken into two phases: Firstly, Tasmania where it attended a model railway convention there and then, Adelaide, where it was in the care of Andrew Emmett. Andrew has kindly provided the notes and photographs that make up this report.

In the future, I hope to have some details of its time in Tasmania to complete the story of its time in Australia.

So, without any further ado, here are Andrew's notes:

The brake van arrived in Adelaide from Tasmania in early December 2025.

Its first outing was to the end of year meeting of the local British Railway Modellers of Australia group on 15th December 2025 where it was on display.

After Christmas, we took it south of Adelaide to Victor Harbor, Middleton and Goolwa where it was photographed with the Cockle Train run by SteamRanger (the operating arm of the Australian Railway Historical Society in South Australia). In the period between 27th December and 3rd January SteamRanger run two trains on the Cockle Train service making it an ideal time to venture to the area for some photography. The two trains were hauled by Rx207, built by North British (entering service on 5th December 1913) and South Australian built (1936) 620 class pacific No 621 which bears some resemblance at the front end to the LNER P2 Earl Marischal.



The brake van being dwarfed at the meeting of Rx 207 and 621 at Middleton, Sth Australia. The gauge of this railway is 5' 3" the original broad gauge used for the Adelaide area and the railway to the state of Victoria.

The Cockle Train service runs between Goolwa and Victor Harbor a distance of 17.7km (11 miles), with intermediate stations at Middleton and Port Elliott. The first railway in South Australia was a horse drawn line between the Port of Goolwa on the Lower Murray River and Port Elliott where produce and other goods travelling down the river from inland by paddle steamer could be transferred to ship in Horseshoe Bay at Port Elliott. The railway opened in 1854 and although originally intended to be steam powered it wasn't until 1884 that steam locomotives took over (by which time a line had been constructed that connected Goolwa directly with Adelaide). In addition to being the first railway in South Australia, the line was also the first railway to be laid with iron rails in Australia so it holds a unique place in Australia's transportation history. The line was extended to Victor Harbor in 1864 after experience had shown the harbour at Port Elliott was unsafe even for the smallest of cutters, seven ships being wrecked in that ten-year period.

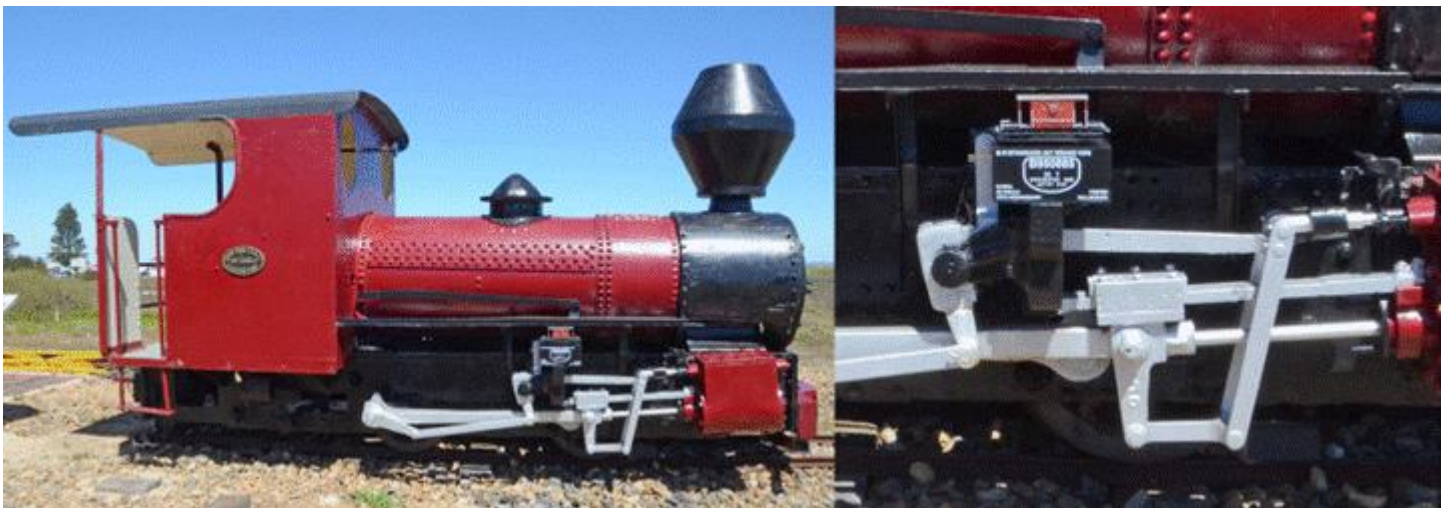


Another view with Rx207 at Middleton once again.



On the running board of Rx207. The Piping Shrike (White-backed Magpie) on a gold disc is the state emblem for South Australia.

Later that day the brake van was taken to the Milang Historic Railway Museum and South Australian Light Railway Centre where it was photographed with a range of exhibits. Milang is located on Lake Alexandrina at the bottom end of the River Murray in South Australia, but further north than Goolwa. A railway line was completed in 1884 to Milang from Sandergrrove (a station on the line between Goolwa and Adelaide). From 1884 until completion of a railway between Adelaide and Melbourne in 1887, mails between the two locations travelled by rail from Adelaide to Milang, transferred to paddle steamer to cross Lake Alexandrina then travelled by horse-drawn coach to Melbourne.



Old Sugar Cane Fowler built 0-4-0 loco at the Milang Railway Museum and South Australian Light Railway Centre.



BV on SAR English Electric powered 5' 3" gauge shunter 351 built 1949 seen at the same location.



With a pair of 2ft gauge diesel 0-4-0s at Milang: On the left: simplex No.21575; and a Ruston shunter and on the right.

On, 11th January 2026 the brake van was taken to the Australian National Railway Museum at Port Adelaide where it was photographed with a wide range of exhibits of UK origin.



In the National Railway Museum: On the left, the brake van with 500 Class 4-8-4 No 504 built by Armstrong-Whitworth in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1926 and, on the right, with NRM member, John Kalaitzis, and English Electric powered No. 900, the first mainline diesel locomotive in South Australia.

After this, a brief visit into the city of Adelaide was undertaken where the brake van was photographed near to the famous Adelaide Oval.

Prior to sending the brake van back to New Zealand I took the liberty of photographing it on my 4mm scale OO LNER/LMS layout!



The brake van on Andrew Emmett's OO model railway.



Another view outside the main engine shed.