



Priceless SA Rail Treasure Ready to Roll

Heritage Weekend, 23-24 April 2016

Pichi Richi Railway, Quorn, Flinders Ranges, South Australia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Steam Motor Coach #1 "The Coffee Pot" on its final test run in the Pichi Richi Pass, Flinders Ranges. Photo: Pichi Richi Railway/Caleb Jenkins.

The last operating engine of its kind in the world, the iconic ‘Coffee Pot’ is set to return to the rails this month.

Late in the afternoon of Easter Sunday, a shrill whistle resounded over Quorn as Steam Motor Coach No. 1, affectionately known as ‘The Coffee Pot’, successfully made its way through the Pichi Richi Pass on its final test run ahead of its official re-launch at this month’s *Heritage Weekend*.

Built in England in 1905, this luxuriously appointed Steam Motor Coach combined engine and carriage in one compact unit. It served the Great Northern Line between the outback towns of Pt Augusta, Quorn, and Hawker from 1906 until 1928, finally retiring from service in 1932.

Back then this little engine meant a lot to the isolated communities north of Quorn, cutting a two day journey down to just one day. The new “motor” made train hire possible for sporting and social groups, who piled into the little motor coach for social trips – often well exceeding its official capacity.

Steam Motor Coach No. 1 offered the latest innovations of its day, including the first electric light aboard any South Australian rail vehicle. Despite its cutting-edge design, the machine’s small water carrying capacity made it less than ideal for operation across the vast Australian Outback. To ensure an adequate water supply over longer distances, railway men would fill used kegs with water, and strap these to the front of the engine.

As the story goes, one day a wag chalked “coffee” and “cocoa” on the spare water kegs. The joke – and the name - stuck. The Coffee Pot: great for making a cuppa,

less suited to a long outback journey!

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In the mid 1950s Quorn's Railway Depot closed. After years standing unused in the Depot's carpentry shed, the Coffee Pot was moved to the Commonwealth Railways base at Port Augusta where it was refurbished for The National Trust. In 1960 The Coffee Pot was placed on static display outside the brand new Railway Station at Alice Springs.

Fast forward to 1975, and returning the Coffee Pot to its original home quickly became a priority for the newly-founded Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society.

"We arranged to swap a horse-drawn wagon, once used for the overland mail, in return for the Coffee Pot. It was a pretty good deal", says Hayden Hart, a founding member of the Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society, and the project leader of the Coffee Pot's first restoration.

"This was in the early days – we were still building sheds and working out how to manage restorations with limited equipment and experience. It took 8 or 9 years, but we did get the engine ready to run again. On the day we launched in '84, everyone got into the spirit in heritage costume, dressed just as people did back in 1906 when the Coffee Pot made its maiden trip".

The "Coffee Pot" has been the Pichi Richi Railway's flagship engine ever since, and will be fondly remembered by many South Australians who travelled on the Pichi Richi Railway during the 80s, 90s and early 2000's.

After passing its 100th birthday, The Coffee Pot was taken out of service for overhaul in 2006.

"Since then, our team of volunteers have worked tirelessly to reassemble the diminutive engine, after detailed boiler examination and other minor works to the engine unit", said Locomotive Superintendent, David Heah.

"We're delighted to finally see the Coffee Pot back on the rails, but there's still more to do. Our volunteers are working on another locomotive and a carriage right now, as well keeping our running engines and carriages in top condition. It's a big undertaking, but at the end of the day it's really fulfilling to see these living, breathing machines still turning a wheel under their own steam. It's what keeps us all coming back to Quorn".



Pichi Richi Railway Volunteers Jeremy Browne, Neil Ingram, Brownyn Schutte and John Smythe made the Coffee Pot's successful test run to Woolshed Flat. Photo: Pichi Richi Railway/Maikha Ly

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All Aboard!

Coffee Pot Official Re-launch and \$5 Shuttle Ride & Workshop Tour

Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society member and well-known railfan Brenton Ragless will officially re-launch the Coffee Pot back into service at Quorn Railway Station, Saturday 23 April at 10am.

Historic rolling stock will be on public display on Saturday and Sunday, admission free.

For just \$5 visitors can enjoy a shuttle ride on The Coffee Pot to the Railway's Quorn workshops for a behind-the-scenes tour, departing Quorn Railway Station hourly, from 12pm Saturday 23rd and 10am Sunday 24th.

All proceeds support the Pichi Richi Railway Preservation Society's work preserving South Australian Railway Heritage. Visit www.pichirichirailway.org.au for more details.

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FULL HERITAGE WEEKEND PROGRAMME:

<http://www.pichirichirailway.org.au/events/upcoming-events>

BOOKINGS:

Coffee Pot Shuttle available on the day only – no advance purchase. Please note that sturdy, covered footwear is required in our workshops. Prams and wheelchairs cannot be accommodated in either the Coffee Pot or Workshop area. Usual terms and conditions of travel also apply.

Pichi Richi Explorer book tickets at www.pichirichirailway.org.au or phone 1800 77 7245 (1800 PR RAIL)

INTERVIEWS, HI-RES PHOTOS AND VIDEO FOOTAGE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Media Invitation

Saturday 23 April 2016

Media are invited to observe and photograph the official launch of the Coffee Pot at 10am, then join us for an 11am shuttle ride and workshop tour. Optional ride on the Pichi Richi Explorer 2.5hour steam train ride through the stunning Pichi Richi Pass, departing Quorn at 2.30pm, and returning at 4pm.

Spaces are limited. Reserve your spot now, and receive a list of photographic opportunities.

Contact:

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