

Valley) and that No. 360X had the honour and privilege of being the first locomotive to enter Newnes on the completion of the line. It should be noted that a system of small diameter pipes supplied thin streams of water from the side-tanks to the wheel flanges of the engine to enable easy negotiation of the sharper curved portions of the Wolgan track, which was designed to be operated by Shay type articulated locomotives. Upon the opening of the line to Newnes No. 360X was transferred to Torbane where it allegedly replaced No. 69X on the company's private line.

There is a rumour that a small 0-6-0 side-tank locomotive, resplendent in green livery, also saw a limited period of service at Torbane. This engine was built for the Commonwealth Oil Corporation (according to local report) in 1908 by Messrs. Kerr Stuart and Company, of Stoke-on-Trent, their work's number 780. It is a possibility that the name "CONSTANCE" was bestowed on this acquisition as it first entered service, the nameplates being later transferred to No. 1 Shay locomotive at Newnes.

The Commonwealth Oil Corporation utilised their large capacity high-sided bogie wagons, colloquially known as "DREADNOUGHTS", for the conveyance of "Export" shale from their loading staith at Torbane oil-works. The crude oil was transferred from Torbane to Hartley Vale siding in four-wheeled tank-wagons of 3000 gallon capacity. The oil content of these vehicles was gravitated through pipes into storage tanks installed at the Hartley Vale sidings, or direct into the metre-gauge tank-wagons of 350 gallons capacity for transference to the Hartley Vale refinery.

The difficult siding arrangement at Torbane Siding forced the Commonwealth Oil Corporation to lay in a dead-end siding immediately north of their junction, the entrance point facing to Down trains. Movements of their private locomotive beyond the catch-point protecting the Government Railway was prohibited and a second siding, facing towards Up trains working over the private line from Torbane retorts, was laid in on the eastern side of, and at a lower level than the adjacent Departmental siding. The new arrangement solved the shunting problem as it provided separate sidings for inward and outward traffic and came into operation during July 1909.

In April 1911 it is interesting to note that 25,000 gallons of oil from Torbane was dispatched to Darling Harbour for the Royal Australian Navy destroyers "HMAS PARRAMATTA" and "HMAS YARRA". A further 70,000 gallons of oil, in addition to several wagons of kerosene, fulfilled



Ex-N.S.W.G.R. F-class No. 360x which was used on the Torbane Private Railway. G.H. Eardley colln.

the total order of 251 tons. Nineteen tank-wagons, including several of the company's bogie "JUMBO" type of 5000 gallons capacity, were used in the delivery of the consignment. The oil was retorted from the shale at Torbane and refined at Hartley Vale.

THE CLOSURE OF THE OIL AND SHALE INDUSTRY AT TORBANE.

At the 1911 period there was a spate of industrial strife, one strike bringing activities at Torbane to a standstill for more than seven months, no doubt to the great joy of the oil importing interests. Although the unrest eventually subsided and work re-commenced by December 1911 the management made the decision to restrict shale mining operations in the area and concentrate their attention to the development of the industry at Newnes. However, during 1912 the Commonwealth Oil Corporation went into liquidation and the receivers, in view of the estimated exhaustion of payable shale in the Genowlan Valley, confirmed the previous decision, and by July 1913 the retorts were being demolished for re-erection at Newnes.

What may be regarded as the final social event at Torbane Township occurred in March 1913 when