

R's", left at an early age in order to enter lucrative employment at the nearby oil-works and its ancillary industries. The school house may have had claims to be the local architectural show-piece. At first the village was not provided with a hostelry, an omission brought about, no doubt, by the dour religious principles of somebody in authority. However, at a later date, a forty-roomed hotel came into being, much to the satisfaction of the hard-worked miners and the men employed at the retorts. The miners were paid the sum of three shillings and nine-pence per ton of usable coal or shale, the greater their daily output the larger their pay check. In the early years of the Joadja mining venture the area was free from strikes and industrial unrest as the working conditions generally were favourable and in the men's interests.

At 1881 some fifty men were engaged in winning 350 tons of shale per week, which was either exported or treated locally for oil extraction, a process which furnished employment for fourteen men who operated on a continuous shift basis. Their duties comprised the loading and firing of the various retorts and their subsequent

emptying and recharging, together with the removal of residual ash. There was a hot and labourious job carried out in the open without protection from the vagaries of the weather. The distillation procedure at the retorts was carried out at an extremely low temperature to obviate "flashing" of the vapours before they reached the cooling condensers. The resultant crude oil, at this stage of its manufacture, stank to high heaven, and was gravitated through pipe lines to the refinery where it needed at least two further distillations at the fractionating columns, followed by a washing treatment before, as refined kerosene, it was ready to be poured into four gallon tins and placed upon the market. One particular by-product of the refinery, now known as petrol, was then regarded as worthless and thousands of gallons of this volatile liquid found their way into the nearest creek. Then, as now, industrial managements had no compunction about fouling natural waterways or their immediate environment.



*The only photo forthcoming identified as Joadja locomotive No. 4, Andrew Barclay B/N 237-1881. The locomotive is seen here at work for subsequent owners at Woolgoolga, N.S.W. G.H. Eardley colln.*