

A raised passenger platform, named Hartley, was built about 1871 and placed on the Down side of the single main line immediately adjacent to the transfer sidings. This station catered for the transport needs of the growing township sited near the oil-works in Hartley Vale, a new roadway, known as Hartley Pass and some three miles in length, being constructed to give access to the railway station. The name was changed to Hartley Vale in February 1874, obviously to avoid confusion with the old established village of Hartley grouped around the Great Western Road many miles away.

During 1885 a new platform was built on the Up side of the main line which remained in use until December 2nd 1901, when the station was changed to the Down side once again, to make way for the provision of a full length interlocked crossing loop. With the coming of the duplication a new island platform was built which opened on August 25th 1911. At this time the shale transference siding was extended southwards to link with the Up main line, a long wanted traffic facility which, characteristically and traditionally, was destined to fall into complete disuse within a few months with the closing of the oil-works.

It is interesting to record that Departmental Regulations issued in 1892 required that "Shunting at Hartley Vale Siding required the utmost care in lowering the trucks, whether lowered from main line or siding, and the whole of the brake-power, and in addition, several sprags must be used, to secure that portion of the train left on the main line on to which the trucks have to be lowered. Empty trucks for Hartley Vale Siding must only be put in by Down trains". From this last statement it can be concluded that Down trains lifted outwards traffic from the sidings and took the vehicles forward to Clarence for subsequent return by Up trains proceeding to Sydney.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WESTERN OIL REFINERY AT WATERLOO

One of the more serious problems associated with the refining of crude-oil was to obtain an adequate supply or fresh water for cooling the vapour condensers. A survey of the River Lett and its tributary streams in the Vale of Clwydd was unre-

warding, therefore the Western Kerosene Oil Company had to seek elsewhere. The company finally decided to take over an area of some twelve acres at the head of Shea's Creek, south of the suburb of Waterloo, near Sydney. This land was low-lying and virtually surrounded by fresh-water swamps fed by copious springs and at least one large pool was nearby on the eastern side of Botany Road. From a transport point of view the site was far from desirable, as it meant trucking the shale and crude-oil from Hartley Vale Siding to the Sydney goods yard (then adjacent to Prince Alfred Park) and from thence by horse drays along Botany Road for a distance of some three and a half miles. The site of the oil-works at Waterloo lay between Botany Road and O'Riordan Street and south of the cross intersection of Johnson Street.

The retorting and refining plant at Waterloo was completed in December 1868, the fifteen retorts initially in use being fashioned after the manner of gas retorts, having a capacity of 5 cwts each and set up in batches of five. The installation was designed, and the various components made, in England, the local erection being carried out by Mr. Fell and several assistants, gentlemen who also came from England and were possessed with a wide knowledge of the technical processes involved. The refined kerosene was placed on the market as "COMET OIL", the "BOTTLED SUNSHINE OF AUSTRALIA". The remaining products from the distillation circuit were gasolene, benzine, spongeline, paraffine, and a miscellaneous range of lubricating and other oils and by-products. Waste effluents were discharged, of course, into the hitherto pellucid waters of Shea's Creek. As it would only pay to send high-grade shale to Waterloo the screening was soon responsible for the accumulation of a large quantity of low-grade shale "at grass", the mineral being placed in heaps outside each adit and shaft. Shale and oils from Hartley were sent to San Francisco, India, China, and Europe, but large quantities were placed with the various Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

The constant passage of the shale carts passing to and fro along Botany Road from Sydney goods yard to the Waterloo refinery did not go unnoticed, although the reasons for this traffic were not

Opposite:

View of Hartley Vale taken in 1906.

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At the bottom of the Hartley Vale Incline, 1906.

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