

perhaps appreciated. In sarcastic vein one gentleman voiced his thoughts in the Sydney press as follows:- "It seems to me, however, that as much parade of the raw materials is less excusable than the roundabout route of the under-taker who takes his melancholy pageant through the busiest parts of George Street Sydney. The latter may mean profit for Mr. Mould; but the former had always struck me as a dead loss, unless it be regarded in the light of a benevolent desire to encourage traffic on the railway and to dispense coin amongst the carters".

THE NEW SOUTH WALES SHALE AND OIL COMPANY LIMITED

The two oil companies operating on adjacent properties at Petrolea Vale, each formed with a capital of £50,000, extended their financial resources to such an extent that they both incurred a separate debt of some £20,000. Consequently the companies sought a merger of interests, which was agreed to in November 1871, and resulted in the formation of a new organisation, known as the New South Wales Shale and Oil Company Limited and was incorporated on February 10th 1873., with an entirely new directorate.

As a result of the merger there is reason to believe that the main haulage way of the former Western Kerosene Oil Company was extended to the valley floor where a triangular track arrangement was met, thus giving direct rail access to the southern and northern portions of Petrolea Vale. At the former terminal loop of the haulage way a wooden rope guide was noted about 1950, evidently brought into use by a slight change in the direction of the new lower section of the haulage, whilst at the base of the haulage there is photographic proof that an arrangement of horizontally placed poles, jutting out from each side of the single track, to allow free play of the winding cable, from either side, when attached to vehicles being lowered on to, or being hauled from either curved leg of the triangular junction.

The straight north-south leg of the triangular junction was extended as a single line for about half a mile, crossing Reedy Creek by a log-bridge to a dead-end terminus. Prior to this stop being attained, say at shunting-neck distance, a trailing point sent its branch north-westward for a short distance to serve the base level of a loading staith

placed in front of an adit driven into the bottom slopes of Mount Dixon. The contents of the mine skips, running at the higher level, were tipped at the staith into the metre gauge wagons standing at the lower level. This mine was located to the west of the Long Alley Road.

The northern extension of the north-south leg of the triangular junction passed along near the eastern bank of Reedy Creek to link with the former Hartley Kerosene Oil and Paraffine Company's lines. It is not known as to whether the two tramways shared a common gauge at this early period but, according to local information, the latter company's track was operated at a later date by the date by the merger company's locomotives, of which more anon. At first the somewhat limited trackage on the floor of the valley was worked by horse traction. Another result of the merger was the decision to discontinue refining activities at Hartley Vale, the shale being sent to the Waterloo works for treatment, where in 1871, fourteen retorts were in operation producing 16,000 gallons per week and in 1877 one hundred retorts came into constant use.

In 1880 the company erected a bench of new retorts at Hartley Vale and a refinery on the northern side of the Hartley Pass Road. With these installation the processing of low grade shale (hitherto unused) was undertaken, while the richer shales continued to be sent to Waterloo. During 1882 it was recorded that when trade was brisk some five thousand tons of shale per month was sent by rail to Sydney, a large quantity to the Waterloo works. The retorts at Hartley Vale had a weekly output of two thousand gallons of crude oil, which was drummed and also sent to Sydney for further treatment.

With the development of the new kerosene refinery at Hartley Vale it became necessary to extend the "Valley-flat" tramway system northwards, consequently the metre gauge track was carried, on the level across the Hartley Pass Road, skirting the company's brick pits and kilns, and keeping to the eastern side of Reedy Creek. At a distance of about a quarter of a mile the first facing point of the refinery yard was met, the branch siding veering slightly north-eastwards where a second facing point added another dead-end siding, both lines running parallel to each other. A galvanised-iron clad locomotive shed, of single road capacity, also had its facing entrance point

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The Mort's Dock locomotive at the refinery in Hartley Vale in 1906.

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