

shale industry and it quickly became a so-called "Ghost Town". The hotel was removed by bullock team to Lurline Street, Katoomba, for re-erection. The desolation of the former mountain-walled village was completed when the Public Works Department, engaged with the Katoomba sewerage scheme, saw fit to dump thousands of tons of rock detritus into the fern-filled glen.

The lease of the land held by the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company at West Katoomba expired in March, 1906, prior to which period gangs of men, with the help of two bullock teams, removed rails and all manner of equipment, together with quantities of coal and shale, to a vacant allotment of land adjoining the Great Western Railway, where it was placed ready for further transshipment. Most of the equipment was transferred to Torbane where the Australian Kerosene Oil and Mineral Company, during 1896, had acquired the leases formerly held by the Genowlan Shale Company at Airly.

THE KATOOMBA COLLIERY LIMITED, WEST KATOOMBA.

Although perhaps out of text it is thought desirable to mention further developments which affected the former cable-haulage track between the long abandoned coal mine at the base of the Malaita Point cliffs and the Engine Bank at West Katoomba. A syndicate of local miners was instrumental in forming the Katoomba Colliery Limited, registered under the Company's Act on May 29th 1925. An area of some 160 acres was leased insofar as the mineral rights were concerned and coal mining activities resumed, the product being sold locally to the Katoomba Electric Power-house or in smaller quantities to hotels, boarding houses, and residents by Mr Duff, a wood and coal merchant with premises at Buti Street Katoomba.

It was necessary to rehabilitate the former haulage up the cliff face at Malaita Point and to this end a new railway, with a gauge of forty seven inches, was laid, the rails being spiked to cross wooden sleepers of various lengths to suit the constricted widths of the road bed and its rocky protuberances and washed out water channels. We have been told that a steam-driven winding engine was installed together with a single-tubed Cornish boiler which had an approximate length of thirty feet and a diameter of six feet. The fire-tube discharged its smoke into a square-shaped brick chimney about fifty feet in height, a landmark rising amidst the dense surrounding bushland. One of the distinctive features of the haulage engine was the alternate chug-chug-chug-chug, in slow motion emanating

from two separate exhaust pipes, sounds which echoed throughout the deep gullies and valleys of the neighbourhood and were unfavourably commented upon by nearby householders.

The new engine-house had a low gable-ended roof of galvanised-iron, the southern side being enclosed against the prevailing winds. At the northern end of the haulage way the track ascended a short steeply graded wooden trestle to terminate above an elevated wooden loading bin, the outer end of the single line being sharply up-graded to facilitate the gravity discharge of the solitary four-wheeled wagon utilised for carrying the coal up the slope. The large capacity bin was fitted with bottom doors and shoots for loading the various road motor lorries engaged in the distribution of the coal. At the southern or bottom end of the haulage way the track, still maintaining its steep down grade, terminated below the level of the mine skipways, an arrangement which allowed the coal to be directly tipped from the skips into the above-mentioned solitary wagon. The speed of the latter vehicle as it traversed the new haulage was restricted to an average of seven miles per hour.

The special wagon was an amazing vehicle, its lop-sided appearance gave it a distinctive personality. Sawn timber was used in its construction, the side planks being vertically placed. To give a degree of rigidity diagonally fitted stay planks were added to the sides. A narrow footboard at base level was supported outside the, shall we say, northern end, to give standing room for employees. To avoid coal spillage the fixed northern end was about three feet high, whilst the southern end, fitted with a top hinged door for its full dimensions that had a secure latched fastening at its base, was about five feet in its height, the length of the body being in the vicinity of seven feet, and the width about four feet. The measurements are approximate and were made many years ago without the benefit of a ruler. Four cast-iron wheels, about nine inches in diameter, served to support the wagon.

Len and Gwen Eardley have related that about 1926 they were accompanied by a large party of friends when they walked the length of the famed Federal Pass from Leura to the foot of the coal haulage tramway. The banksman smiled at the footsore pedestrians and said "Like a ride in the coal wagon to the top?". Great was the appreciation of this kind and unexpected offer. The banksman obtained several empty chaff bags from the nearby pit-pony stables, dusted down the grimy walls of the wagon and placed bags on the sloping floor for the benefit of his passengers. On the principle of "Ladies first" the females were