

*Above:* An overall view of Bulli Jetty. On the left, a ship is loading, while on the right, steam tram motor No. 21 is about to couple up to a rake of empty wagons. *Below right:* Bulli Colliery No.1 (Vale & Lacy 2 of 1867). Both photos: ARHSnsw Railway Resource Centre

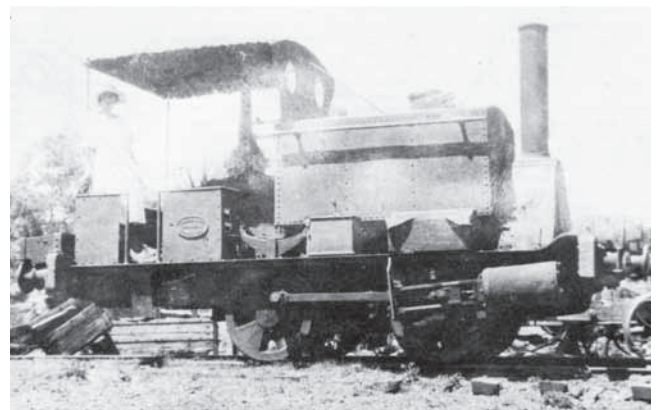
## A peculiar incident at Bulli Colliery

by Richard Horne

Industrial locomotives are called upon to perform many tasks, but perhaps none more unusual than that undertaken by one at Bulli Colliery, NSW, on Friday 29 December 1911. The story, reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 1 January 1912, concerned a mysterious fish seen in the sea off Bulli on the 28 December, which caused a large crowd of curious onlookers to gather on the jetty and beach. As it approached the jetty, fishermen identified it as a large shark, but others with over-active imaginations declared that 'some fabulous monster of the deep could be seen at Bulli'. Fishermen threw meat and fish into the sea which the shark ignored until, finally, a leg of mutton was too much of a temptation, after which it devoured everything, including bait, hooks and lines.

The following day an enormous hook was attached to the centre of a cable stretched between the jetty and a buoy some 40 yards away. It was baited with meat which the shark took, breaking bolt and hook but not breaking free of the line. A Captain Sinclair, of the Riverview St Ignatius College, who was on Christmas vacation at Bulli, set out in a small boat, accompanied by a workman from Bulli Colliery. The ensuing battle, to screams from the assembled crowd, saw the boat nearly dashed to pieces by the shark, but the captain managed to place a hook in its mouth and it was hauled up to the jetty by no less than 18 men. Attempts to haul it out of the water failed until a steam winch was utilised and it was finally landed on the jetty. It was then, with difficulty, put on a rail trolley and taken to the end of the jetty to be photographed. It was 13ft 9in in length, had a jaw width of 20 inches and weighed over half a ton.

At the suggestion of the Bulli Colliery manager, Mr Youill, the shark was hauled by one of the colliery's locomotives to a shed in the colliery, where it was exhibited with the proceeds



benefitting the local hospital. In the flowery prose of the time, this unique task for a locomotive was described thus:

*When the fish was removed from the pier to the impromptu exhibition buildings, it was followed by a concourse of people. The precession savoured of the funeral of some celebrity. The monster lay on a trolley (sic), with a tarpaulin for a shroud, and in his death – he died bravely – was honoured like a viking of old. The colliery engine was summoned, and coupled to the trolley; a whistle blew shrilly in the still air, and the cortege moved slowly to the shrine, to the accompaniment of the groaning of the trolley, the grunting of an asthmatical locomotive, and the dismal strains of music produced by two stones in a kerosene can, vigorously shaken by a small boy of surprising strength. The monster now lies on his catafalque, and can be viewed by all and sundry for a small charge for admission.*

Which locomotive was thus honoured is not known, but at the time Bulli Colliery had three locomotives in use. They were No. 1, a 0-4-0ST built by Vale & Lacy in 1867 (its sister, No. 2, built in 1868, had been withdrawn c.1906, with the frame and motion used as a haulage engine) and two steam tram motors, ex-Sydney Nos. 21 and 62 built by Baldwin, 5451 of 1881 and 6983 of 1884, respectively. It would be pleasant to think that the 'asthmatical' one was the 1867 veteran and, indeed, it may have been so, for use of a steam tram motor would surely have warranted mention in such a detailed newspaper report.