

REPORT ON VISIT TO RICHMOND VALE RAILWAY & MUSEUM

By Stephen Davis KMS member

- Visited on Sunday 13 October 2013
- Arrived at Richmond Main Entrance just before 11am
- Total fire ban in effect due to hot and blustery weather, so no steam loco in operation. In any case only 'Marjorie' in operating condition, 10 class SMR loco's (2) at Thirlmere (NSWRTM) for boiler examination etc.
- After entering front door of the exhibit/shop/amenities/cafe/tertia building and paying admission fee \$10 we found that a train was due to leave for Pelaw Main in about 5 minutes time at 11am. We made a dash over about 200m and got on (small diesel loco) and a matchbox carriage, vintage unknown). After one of the volunteers release the hand wheel brake inside the carriage, the train proceeded to Pelaw Main rather slowly, probably due to the relatively small loco and the rough ride of the carriage even experienced at this low speed

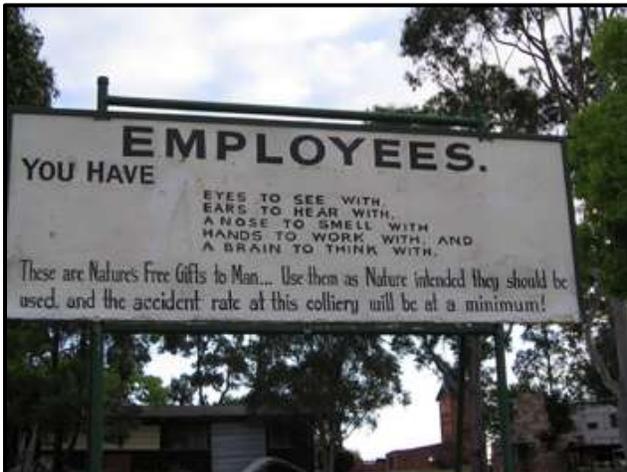


Loco and carriage travelled on during visit



Another view of carriage but not the same loco – this one is Marjorie (saddle tank type)

- Upon arrival at Pelaw Main (about 15 mins. duration) we were informed by the same volunteer who operated the carriage hand brake that there would be a 10 min. turnaround time (loco runs around the carriage from one end to the other) for the return journey back to Richmond Main. During those 10 mins. I managed to view the surface workings remains of the Pelaw Main Colliery (ventilation shaft, compressor house, bathroom, haulage house, admin office) Note message to employees in image below – at Pelaw Main



Note the very low regard of employees that management had of them during Colliery working days

- Upon return to Richmond Main lunch was taken
- After lunch enquires were made regarding visiting the main administration building, plus other large exhibits (ex BHP hot metal ladle, slag ladle etc.) For the latter we couldn't approach due to safety concerns, but for the former we were in luck. Three other visitors were also interested and thus managed to obtain a very knowledgeable guide, who opened up the most of the building for viewing by us
- Apart from the normal items you might expect to see in a coal mining museum such as communication systems, helmets, etc.) the things to note here are; the large wooden doors both external and internal and their features, the staircase between ground and first floor with its intricate detail in the hand rail and the balustrades, the huge boardroom on the first floor that overlooking the main features of the surface workings, the cellar with its huge safe, the heavy steel security door at the bottom, the copious paper records still in existence eg dealing with wages back to the 1940's, photos in colour of the garden beds in front of the building dating from 1956, and finally the wrap around balcony on the first floor



Museum & former
administration building

- Following the completion of the tour of the Administration building, and due to the weather as previously noted the visit was wound up, apart visiting the shop for any interesting DVD's and books (local coal mining industry)
- Observations
 - The museum intends to extend the rail track a further 1.8 km towards Weston. They have the rails, sleepers etc required, but unfortunately need about \$ 2 million to lay the track and associated earthworks (\$250,000 alone for a single level crossing) where roads are crossed
 - When the museum first started all existing track was torn up, and it is to their credit that they have managed to re-lay up to my estimate of 3 km of track from other tracks closed elsewhere in the Hunter region
 - Regarding the Cafeteria, there is not much in the way of reasonable food. Only ice cream, soft drinks, tea & coffee. So for something more substantial, bring your own as we did. Apart from this, the volunteers are very helpful, & some (the guide to the Admin. Building for example) were very knowledgeable regarding the history of the Mine.
 - There were only about half a dozen volunteers on duty when we visited. Apparently a lot of them are petrol heads as well, as the Sunday we visited was the Bathurst Car race day as well
 - It is well worth a visit. See their website beforehand www.richmondvalerailwaymuseum.org