

# Platform full as 3237 steams in

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HUNDREDS of steam train enthusiasts lined the Kempsey Railway Station platform to welcome steam locomotive 3237 on Friday.

Some residents had memories of catching a steam train as a young child, while others brought their children along as if locomotive 3237 was something out of the Thomas the Tank Engine series.

The 3237 is one of just four remaining 32-class steam locomotives, introduced to NSW railways from 1892.

One of the lucky passengers on board the 3237 was Rick Rushton. Mr Rushton's boss gave him the day off work to catch the 3237 from Taree to Kempsey.

"I came for a ride up with my wife and two kids, it was terrific," he said.

"It goes very well believe it or not and it had plenty of grunt and pull up the hills.

"The carriage we were in came over from England in 1871 and it was still in service up until 1971."

The Rushtons spent the afternoon in Kempsey having lunch and a look at the shops before catching the XPT back to Taree.

The 32-class engines were found all over the State and were a common sight on the Illawarra line, between Sydney and Newcastle and in distant parts of the State.

On Friday the 3237 was pulling its carriages, plus seven tonnes of high-quality Newcastle coal to keep its boiler firing.

The Kempsey Fire Brigade was needed at Kempsey to help refill the boiler with water.

Kempsey station captain Ray Campbell said it was great to see so many people gathered at the station.

"There would have been a couple of hundred people," Mr Campbell said.

"It was something people in Kempsey don't get to see and probably won't see again."

Local residents were able to view the historic train for just over an hour before it set off for Grafton. Friday's steam train stopover was part of the North Coast tour by the Lachlan Valley Railway, which is taking the steam engine to Grafton and Casino for Casino Beef Week.

The 3237 will be returning and operating trips in early July.