VISIT TO NEWCASTLE, SATURDAY/SUNDAY, 6th/7th NOVEMBER:

The visit to Newcastle on the weekend of 6th/7th November was an outstanding success, thanks to our friends of that District Society and not forgetting the lovely weather conditions.

Our introduction was a visit to Christ Church Cathedral, a really magnificent edifice situated on a high hill overlooking the city, which also commanded a fine view of the harbour and Stockton beaches to the north. This Cathedral was founded in 1847. The Rev. Mr. J. D. Bleakley (Chaplain) was our guide and philosopher and we were entranced for over an hour at his description of the various sections including the Chapels of St. Nicholas, The Warriors, Tyrell Memorial and St. Christopher, The Chancel, Sanctuary, Canterbury Stone, Pulpit, Tor H. Bench, Windows, Organ, Lectern and Nave.

We then visited the Cultural Centre and City Library, where there was a display of pictures of early Newcastle. Here we were entertained at afternoon tea.

In the evening we were entertained at Blackall House with a showing of topical colour slides and a delicious supper completed the day's proceedings.

Next day we were guests on a bus tour of all sections of the district, which were seen to advantage and proved of great interest, especially to those of us who were unfamiliar with the coalfields of the north. But we were not prepared for an attack by the "Hexham Greys" when we climbed Mount Sugarloaf (1349 feet), where the local TV station aerials stand. After a fierce fight we retreated, but without casualties.

Lunch was at The Hunter Valley Dairy Company at Hexham, where the old Newcastle Lifeboat "Victoria" and Rocket Wagon are on display. After crossing the Hunter here we proceeded to Raymond Terrace, Grahamstown and Tomago, where we saw the Methodist Church built by the Windeyer family in 1861. Then we returned to Newcastle via the Walsh Island reclaimed area.

Our most grateful thanks to all of those kind people in Newcastle (we mention no individual names) who worked so hard and cheerfully to make the visit so memorable. — W.V.M.

FROM THE "ILLAWARRA MERCURY" OF APRIL, 1858:

BLACK'S BLANKET DAY. — On Thursday, 1st April, we witnessed the distribution of blankets to the blacks at Wollongong. There were only about twenty-five of the original owners of the soil present, including gins and piccaninnies, the latter being of almost every shade from copper color to "whitey-brown." Several kings and chiefs were present, and we are sure such a motley gathering of "crowned heads" for so humble a purpose, would have lowered the dignity of their royal brothers of other climes, could they have been present. Cooma — a darkey whose advance in the adoption of the manners and customs of his civilized masters will be acknowledged when we state that he has taken kindly to boots and was tried by the Bench a few days back for being drunk and disorderly — acted as marshall on the occasion. He assumed the commanding manner in discharging his duties, ordering this one here and that one there in a style which, for pomposity, could not have been excelled if he had been dressed in scarlet and had a sword by his side. Having, after a great deal of pushing and yabbering, got the gentlemen and youths on one side and the ladies and girls on the other, immediately opposite the Court-house verandah, the Chief Constable called up each one by name, and gave, even to the little ones at their mothers' breasts, unto each a blanket of first-rate quality, which they received with a bow and a "thank you," as if it were not the price of one of the finest "jewels in the British Crown." This having been done, Dr. Ellis — a most polite and loyal darkey — induced the rest to "boil up" together, and then called upon them for three cheers for the Queen, which was given with a hearty vociferousness which could only be excelled by their conquerors, and was followed by three more for the Magistrates and another three for Wollongong. The blacks then dispersed.

THE ABORIGINES.—The sable natives of this district (Kiama) came, yesterday, to the Court-house here for the blankets usually given them at this season. The muster was not numerous although there were present, in addition to the Kiama
blocks, several from Wollongong and Shoalhaven. There is a marked falling off, during the last few years, in the number of the tribe. And we noticed that the complexion of nearly all the children is a great deal less dark than that of the full grown forming the group; and that their features preserve not the form peculiar to the darkie of this country. In a few years the native tribe belonging to this locality, though once numerous, will have become extinct. Three and twenty blankets were served out to them, and this number supplied each with one. Evidently pleased with their covering for the winter it was hinted to the others by one of the chiefs, Doctor Ellis, that three cheers should be given for Victoria the Queen. They all cheered lustily three times for the Queen, and then dispersed.

RESULT OF SALES. — Mr. G. K. Waldron sold on Wednesday last, 21st inst., Mr. Charles Moffit’s Dairy Cows, at prices varying from £5 to £14 per head. Also a lot of Young Heifers from £2 to £5 per head. Friday, 23rd April, 1858.

FROM “THE MORNING CHRONICLE” (SYDNEY) OF 27/4/1844:

“...In consequence of the continual annoyance received from the Librarian of the School of Arts, the St. Patrick’s Total Abstinence Society will hold their Weekly Meetings in future in the Saloon of the Royal Hotel — Entrance down the Gateway. First meeting, Monday next, 29th inst., doors open at 7 o’clock.”

(The meetings were held. — Ed.)

REMINDER:
The Christmas Meeting will conclude the Society’s formal activities for 1965 and we look forward to seeing all Members and friends in 1966.

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