Tracing the early life of the young Scotchman, Mr. Dowd was able to show that he hailed from Elgin, and drew from the diaries which Spark had kept and which are now in the Mitchell Library at Sydney.

At 19 years of age Spark left home from London, where, after arriving in 1811, he worked in the counting house of Tod, Spencer & Co. The contents of many letters he wrote at that time gave a picture of the man who at the age of 30 emigrated to Sydney in 1822.

Mr. Dowd asserted that “Spark” without the final “e” was the correct spelling of his name, despite its mis-spelling in some records.

He was soon a merchant in George Street, Sydney; his business grew and he acquired property in several country towns. He farmed in the Hunter Valley. He carried out “takeovers” of other Sydney businesses. He built a fine country home on the south side of Cook’s River at Tempe, which he named, and contributed to the erection of the Church of St. Peter, Cook’s River, after which the suburb of St Peter’s received its name.

In that church he married in 1840 the widow of Surgeon H. W. Radford. “Tempe House” became famous for the large numbers entertained there.

The opening forties filled him with forebodings as the depression grew darker and darker, finally becoming insolvent in 1843. Part by part his properties were sold; business was poor and it was not until 1848 that things became brighter.

By 1853 his Tempe property was put up for sale but there was no rush of offers to buy it. He carried on business in association with Alexander Berry and Edye Manning in shipping, trading to Shoalhaven. Failing health slowed his last few years until he passed away on 21st October, 1856, aged 64 years, being buried in the cemetery at St. Peter’s beside the church he loved so well. He was one of so many who lost their fortunes in the depression of the forties after having done much for New South Wales.

REV. MATTHEW DEVENISH MEARES AND DR. JOHN OSBORN — INFORMATION SOUGHT.

Miss H. Meares of 14 King Street, Grey Lynn, Auckland, New Zealand, seeks Dr. Osborne’s naval record; modern travel brochures and maps, pictures etc of the district to give an idea of Illawarra and Wollongong in particular. Information about and pictures of the homes of the men are invited. Any members of the families, descendants and others interested are invited to correspond with Miss Meares.

ILLAWARRA KNEW SIMPSON OF ANZAC:

Anzac Day brings to mind the self-sacrificing efforts of the ambulance man who found and used a donkey at Gallipoli. The story of his service from April 25 until he was shot on May 19 is told in the well-recommended book “The Man with the Donkey—John Simpson Kirkpatrick — The Good Samaritan of Gallipoli” by Sir Irving Benson (containing a bibliography), published by Hoo-
der and Stoughton, and available on order from local bookshops. “Simpson” served in the coal mines at Coledale, Corrimal and Mount Kembla and enlisted from Australia. Present in the area where he lost his life was Lieut. R. G. Casey who is now Governor-General of Australia.

HENRIETTA HEATHORNE’S “PICTURES OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE, 1843-44” (Concluded):

(A brief note on the author, the daughter of the manager of the Woodstock Mills at Jammeroo, appeared in the Bulletin for April, 1967. She has been describing the preparations for her sister’s wedding).

Our only guests were the doctor and his wife, and her sister, who came on horseback, and our Scotch friends, who travelled in a bullock-dray. Previous to the arrival of these the bride and bridegroom were married in our little parlor, in the presence of my father and mother, my elder half-sister, and myself. Mr. Meares wound up with an address in which he laid great stress upon avoiding the first quarrel!

Then followed the breakfast. Healths were drunk and speeches were made. Was there ever a wedding-breakfast without them?

Soon after, the guests departed, and we of the household were left. In the cool of the evening, amidst the hurrahs of the men, who had had a holiday given them and a bucketful of sherry to drink the health of the bride and bridegroom, these two set out on horseback for their seven-mile ride to the little weatherboard inn at Kiama, escorted by our Sydney messenger to show them the way.

When my half-sister and her husband had settled down, a few miles out of Sydney, in a pretty house at Cook’s River, her own elder sister went to stay with them. Subsequently I paid them a visit. It was to have been for two months, but lengthened out to five years, broken by occasional visits home.

Some two years after I had joined my sister, there arrived in Sydney a ship, the Rattlesnake. It had been sent out by the English Government under the command of Captain Owen Stanley, R.N. with officers especially selected for its duty, that of surveying the coasts of Australia, the Louisiade Archipelage, and New Guinea.

At a private dance given to the officers of the Rattlesnake I met the assistant-surgeon, an enthusiastic follower of natural science. After a few more meetings we became engaged, and eight years after, during five of which both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans separated us, we were married in England.

The engagement was truly a long and weary one, but its crowning gift was above all price, that of forty years of happy wedded life.

The assistant-surgeon of the “Rattlesnake” was Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), afterwards one of the best-known and most controversial Victorian scientists.