JUNE MEETING:

Again we had a capacity house at our June meeting, this time to hear Professor Ross Duncan give a very scholarly and interesting address on Sir Winston Churchill.

Beginning by “letting Winston talk first” through a recording of Churchill’s speech following the evacuation of Dunkirk, Professor Duncan then examined the popular picture of Churchill as the great statesman who, despite his earlier political failures, was the man who saved Britain in 1940.

In a neatly structured address, Professor Duncan took us through Churchill’s life: his political disasters before 1940; his aristocratic family background his childhood and education; and the way all of these combined to influence his personality. By presenting excerpts from contemporary opinion, Professor Duncan built up for us a picture of conservatism, patriotism, pride in empire, pride in family, an eighteenth-century-type non-party statesman, ambitious, aggressive, believing in his own destiny; the resolute, old-fashioned patriot of romantic inclinations who, in the hour of crisis, epitomised the true Briton and the British way. For all his faults, he proved to be the man for the task. As Lord Moran said: “We needed an unreasonable man at the top.”

Professor Duncan built up this picture by quoting the evidence for and against, then leaving his listeners to form their own conclusions. Whatever their conclusions about Churchill’s place in history, all agreed that it was indeed a masterly address, and readily supported Bill Bayley’s vote of thanks.

—F.W.O.

ILLAWARRA PARK PROPOSAL:

The National Trust believes a Regional Park should be created to protect the natural beauty and recreation value of the Illawarra Escarpment and the plateau above it.

And for this reason the Trust has urged the New South Wales Government to proceed, as a matter of urgency, with the next stage of its inquiry into the preservation of the Escarpment.

Findings from Stage 1 of the inquiry—conducted by the Director of the State Pollution Control Commission, Mr. E. J. Coffey—were released recently.

The Trust was disappointed that Mr. Coffey found it necessary to recommend a site within the proposed regional park as a coal refuse dump. It was hoped that an alternative means of refuse disposal might have been considered practical. But this was not so.

In his report Mr. Coffey said that consideration of the regional park proposal did not fall within the terms of reference of Stage 1 of the inquiry.

The Trust urges the Government to structure the terms of reference for Stage II to allow a review of this proposal and consideration of controls to protect the park.

The suggested Illawarra Regional Park runs from Stanwell Park south to Macquarie Pass.

The Trust believes tight controls will be necessary to protect this area of great natural beauty, particularly for the enjoyment of people living on the adjacent highly-industrialised Wollongong coastal strip.