William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882) was a man of great stature in the 19th Century world. It was said of him that: "Not merely as an economist but also as a logician, philosopher, reformer, he stands out as one of the most remarkable men of the age in which he lived." As a young man of only nineteen he was recommended for the post of assayer at the Mint in Sydney, and left England for the colony where he remained for about five years. But the creativity of his life called him back to England in 1859. Though his prosperity and happiness in Sydney had been assured, he was destined for the greater scope of the old world. His publications included "studies in logic, economics and scientific method which gave him a high and enduring place in intellectual history."

So his journal kept during a short stay in Illawarra must be accepted as important in our annals. It is published in the first volume of Black and Konekamp's collection of the papers and correspondence of Jevons. The original journal is now in the Mitchell library. It is too long to publish in full, but extracts are illuminating.

It was 10.30 p.m. on Easter Thursday (April 9) 1857 when Jevons, then aged 24, made his way with carpet bag and mountain barometer to Darling Harbour, there to await the steamer Nora Creina. Though she was due to depart at midnight, she had not even berthed at that hour, and did not do so until 1a.m. Aboard her, the many passengers were able to shelter from the midnight chilliness, but sleep was impossible because some of the excursionists were noisy, and the overhead din of deck cargo being discharged and loaded was loud.

At last the paddle wheels were heard turning; the Nora drew away, only four hours late, and Jevons was able to enjoy scanning the coastline in the misty early morning. He also enjoyed the quietness which seasickness imposed on his "disgusting" fellow passengers; the Gentlemen did not warrant the title, he said, and the "ladies or women" were "no great shakes either." His pleasure increased after breakfast when he found that most of the objectionables—they were Sydney-siders on Easter holidays—were going on to Kiama. At midmorning he landed at the rock pier in Wollongong Harbour and walked the short distance to Russell's Marine Hotel, where St. Mary's College now is. He found it a "most quiet respectable and comfortable establishment."

With unbounded energy, Jevons wasted no time; he washed, "a little" as he says, and at 11 a.m., having taken a sea-level reading on his barometer, he set out for the top of Mt. Keira. His scientific observations need not concern us here, but his general observations are good. Wollongong he liked as a town, though maybe he did not appreciate that the official township was only about twenty years old, so that he was expecting too much of it; "its streets are broad and well laid out in rectangles, but the objection is that they are not filled up with houses and that there are no signs of any buildings going on yet. It does not appear retrograde but only stationary and though checked in its progress at present I have no doubt its excellent position in all respects will render it important sooner or later."

The Mt. Keira Road was then the main mail road to Appin and thence to Sydney. His walk along it reminds us of a fact we tend to
overlook: how since its first settlement large tracts of Illawarra's coastal plains had been fairly denuded of bush. Dapto, he says, was in the "centre of the grazing country." The country he saw on his way to Keira "appeared rich and was entirely cleared and cultivated, houses and barns indicating the prosperity of the owners." Only as the road became steeper was he able to see brushes "which gave me the first idea of the luxuriance of Illawarra vegetation." He was delighted with the mountain itself and its rich and varied plant life in unspoiled bush, "a scene of Nature which surpassed all I had seen before in luxuriant beauty and wildness and the almost tropical novelty of the forms of the plants." Even here, however, were occasional settlers "with their log hut and small cleared space of rich dark coloured soil partly covered in most cases by Indian corn, potatoes or other vegetables." He was guided to the summit by a local lad, not very sharp "for a colonial," and whom he surprised by his endurance of fatigue and coping with the roughness of bush tracks. The lad chatted to him interestingly about the making of cabbage-tree hats. Jevons was impressed by the picturesque view from the mountain and again he noted: "Most parts of the flat lands were extensively cleared, and the cultivated verdant spots and scattered houses and barns formed a sight unaccustomed but yet agreeable to an Australian eye." Pleasing to him was the contrast with the "dark closely wooded and bushy ranges."

After continuing to the back of the mountain, noting the change in the nature of the bush there, it was late when he arrived back at the "rough log hut" of the boy's parents. Though they had been settled only about six months, they had much to show in the way of cultivation and improvements. Tired as he was, his legs bloody from leech bites, he thoroughly enjoyed a meal of weak tea, damper, and plenty of the "famous Wollongong butter."

Even then he had to return to his lodgings, picking his way almost in the dark. "The roads were most execrable and often or even generally only a mere expanse of furrowed mud which it was impossible to avoid by a side path. Walking in the dark was therefore mere mud larking which I had to continue to the very doors of Russel's Hotel since the streets of Wollongong are only the Mother earth, cut up and churned into mud by the traffic of a small town. I reached Russel's, in the dark of night soon after 7, exceedingly fatigued, and wet in the feet as I had been in fact all day. Hot brandy and water, a light supper on fowl and a comfortable bed put me in a fair way to recovery." At eight shillings, his accommodation charge was modest enough.

Jevons was to spend over two days more in Illawarra, including visits to settlers. He gives most interesting descriptions of their dwellings and life; but these must await a later instalment.

(To be continued)

—Edgar Beale.
ILLAWARRA IN 1857.—The Journal of W. S. Jevons (Part 2):  

One of Jevons's purposes in coming to Illawarra was obviously to inspect what was thought to be a mine of black lead, that substance then commonly used for blacking and polishing stove grates, and doorsteps. So on 12th April 1857 he set out. As it so happened, he interrupted his journey by staying overnight at a settler's hut, but it will be convenient in this present summary to describe this second, and very revealing, episode in a concluding instalment, concentrating now on the journey to the mineral deposit on the farmlet beyond Mount Kembla of an old man named Fishlocke (spelt by Jevons Fishlocke).

By some misdirection, Jevons went from Wollongong along the beach towards Tom Thumb Lagoon until, realizing the error, he cut across country westwards. He reached, and admired, the giant fig tree at Figtree; and at the "Figtree Public House" obtained both information and a lift in a cart, which took him over the "execrable road" part of the way towards Mt. Kembla. Yet he soon forgot difficulties as he "entered a country the beauty of which I shall never forget": the "deliciously cool mountain water" of what no doubt was American Creek, the fine trees bedecked with creepers, staghorns and ferns "as if placed there by the hand of some skilful gardener," in a host of small and lovely ground plants—it is a scene we nowadays have to read about. He describes it as "a true Palace of Nature": it was like "some great conservatory or crystal palace" of which the tall trees were the supporting columns and the sky the framework of glass above.

His way lay beyond Kembla to what we now call Cordeaux. But the day was becoming late. He had already passed two huts in a clearing, and so he decided to turn back to spend the night there. This is the episode the telling of which will be kept for later; meanwhile, it may be said that he went off the next morning for Fishlocke's, and the diary tells the story:

"A walk through the bush up the gully was again as enchanting as I have before described it and this time I saw it with all the advantages of the freshness of early morning and freedom from fatigue. About 3/4 of a mile beyond the furthest point I had before reached, I found an extensive cleared space of pretty level ground. Tall ranges were on the right hand, and two streams of pure water of considerable size formed a junction at the corner of the property. The bush consisted of a forest of close large gum trees with abundant ferns and underscrub, a few tree ferns, palm like plants, etc., wholly different however in character from the Illawarra vegetation, and more resembling the ordinary bush. In a new well built little barn I found an old man, who on my stating the object of my visit to be the black-lead mine, announced himself to be Fishlocke, and with much evident delight set about showing me all the improvements and advantages of his land. A part of this was covered by a curious red ferruginous earth, which he said had been pronounced
ood fullers earth, but however this might be, it seemed to me hardly likely to repay the trouble he was taking in cultivating it. The sloping portion of the land on the banks of the branch creek had a dark black soil and was laid out in a kitchen garden or sown with Indian corn, or with Italian rye grass, all of which seemed to flourish.

On the bank of this creek a little above the level of the bed was the black lead seam, into which however a hole of only a few feet dimensions each way had yet been dug. It consisted of a bed 2 to 3 feet thick (as he said) of a soft black shaly substance which when dried has much of the appearance of inferior black lead.” Jevons then gives a later analysis which indicates that the substance was merely a carbonaceous shale which would not be of much use. The journal continues:

“Fishlockes house stood in the centre of the cleared ground on nicely sloping ground. It was a comfortable cottage and showed the same appearance of neat and careful management as I had noticed in everything also on the farm. His queer little body of a wife insisted on my having tea and damper which his daughter provided; the latter also quickly sewed up a little bag in which were deposited a few specimens of the mineral productions of the farm. Then I as quickly as possible started again, the poor old man hobbling after me some distance (for he had been lamed by an accident in felling trees) completing his account, which he had commenced on my first arrival, of his family history, his nine brothers who with himself at one time were all soldiers, his visiting the Cumberland lead mines, his buying this farm of 100 acres about five years since, spending much time and money in making the good road I had rather wondered at, and in searching for the black lead guided as he said by the appearance of the trees, his want of money, and the small mortgage of £100 on the estate, the disgust of his numerous children at his foolishness (sic) as they considered, the elder ones leaving him and settling elsewhere in consequence, and most of all the great importance of the discovery he had at last made, and the attention given to it by numerous great people as well as governments.

"Leaving this simple old man in his comfortable secluded home (there was only one other farm near that of Moran the brother of the cobbler, which was just a short distance across the stream of the Cordeaux River) I hastened back to my former lodgings."

By this he means the hut of Andrew Moran the cobbler, his host of the previous night. Jevons’s stay there, his return after leaving Fishlock’s, and his journey back to Wollongong will be told in a concluding instalment.

Meanwhile, it is opportune to note that the map of the Parish of Kembla shows several portions which could explain locations of the two farms visited by Jevons. Portion 5, extending apparently from about Windy Gully up the slopes of Mt. Kembla, is shown as a grant to Thomas Moran. Clearly Andrew’s hut was in that area, and the discrepancy may be due to the delays in those days in issuing grants; quite often the true grantee was dead by the date of issue,
which was then made into the name of an heir. That may well have been the case here. Portion 276 of 50 acres is shown in old editions of the map as a grant to James Fishlock, whilst nearby are Portions 254 and 259 in the name of William Moran, who could be the brother of Andrew referred to by Jevons. However, a topographical check would be necessary before these tentative identifications could be firmly accepted, and such a check would not be easy because all except Portion 5 are some miles northwest of Kembla, deep in the catchment area, and now reclaimed by the bush.

(To be continued)

—Edgar Beale.
ILLAWARRA IN 1857.—The Journal of W. S. Jevons (Part 3):

It was still 11th April when Jevons was making towards Fishlock's to inspect the supposed black-lead mine. He passed a considerable clearing with two log huts among signs of cultivation. This was Andrew Moran's property. But the unusually good road leading beyond gave him hope of reaching Fishlock's that evening, until discretion and the late hour turned him back to the two huts. He narrates his return:

"A quick walk down the beautiful road I have just described, brought me to the huts, the first of which was locked up, but the second contained a family who received me in a kind hospitable manner I shall not easily forget. On enquiring for Fishlockes, the old man, Andrew Moran, a cobbler by trade, informed me that it was a short way beyond the point I had reached, and expressed much indignation at my passing his own cottage without calling in. His wife, a very serviceable but pleasant looking one, first offered me a cup of fine milk, then pressed me to take a little gin for both of which I thanked them more sincerely than is usually the case. Then as there was unfortunately no bread in the house she set about making some, and soon had it baking in a flat cake at the bottom of the camp kettle, the process of making being completed by mixing up a little flour and water and kneading (sic) it well. Finally they asked me to stay the night and proceed the next morning to Fishlockes, which the quick and evident approach of twilight obliged me to acquiesce in also.

"In time my hunger was appeased by quantities of damper bread and butter with tea but the fare as they said was not the most dainty and did not sit quite easily in my stomach. Besides the cobbler and his wife were present a young woman named Mary Gleeson from Sydney, two young men apparently other relations or else acquaintances of the cobbler and several children. But seated on a rough 3 legged stool by the fire which burned beneath one of the capacious chimneys of a log hut, and amusing myself at the novelty of my lodging and the conversation of the family in which I occasionally joined, I passed a pleasanter evening than I might have done in many circumstances, for instance in a ballroom.

"The hut was itself a curiosity being a complete Robinson-Crusoe-like construction. An iron bed stead, looking glass, a few boxes, pots and pans etc were all the articles of importation and civilization visible for the furniture which Moran had had in Sydney was either sold or lying in Wollongong, its carriage up the mountain being quite out of the question. The table was a sheet of bark, the shelves above it, roughly shaped planks of split wood, the windows holes in the logs closed by rough wooden shutters and unconscious of glass. The cottage had in reality but one apartment a low partition without any door shutting off the part representing the bedroom. About ten o'clock I retired to bed, if getting into bed with two other men can so be called, Moran and one of the young men, his brother I think being my bedfellows. His wife and the young woman slept in
the other half of the hut on the ground before the fire but even such a strange and novel lodging did not prevent me soon falling asleep.

"Sunday, April 12th. I found a log hut a decidedly cool sleeping place, as the cold mountain air blew right through the crevices between the logs. I lay awake most of the night listening to the noise of the wind among the trees and the water in the creek, and fancying it rain. When day dawned however and we got up my apprehensions were most pleasantly disappointed as there was all promise of a true Australian fine day. A small piece of very nice pickled pork, (no fresh meat is of course to be had so far in the bush) with potatoes and pumpkins in vast quantities were boiled for breakfast, immediately after which I started (8 a.m.) for Fishlockes, sincerely thanking the old cobbler and his wife for the kind entertainment he had given me and offering him a sovn (sovereign) which however he absolutely refused."

So refreshed and glorying in the dewy newness of the autumn day he went to Fishlock's and, escaping from the rather talkative old cripple, set out on his return journey. He had, of course, to pass Moran's and to call there because he had left his barometer there. What he found was predictable: "The cobbler and his family had departed for the day down the mountain on a visit but had as kindly as ever left their hut open, a meal ready spread, and my barometer on the table. It was now Noon, and divesting myself of my coat and everything weighty or inconvenient I started to make my way through the bush to the summit of Mt. Kembla, my barometer etc strapped on my back."

The going was hard, but his proceedings were rather what might be expected. He was glad to get back to the huts, impeded finally by "prodigious weeds and nettles which here as at Mt. Keira appeared to spring up wherever the ground has been disturbed by settlers"—an early instance of how secondary growths take over after the clearing of the native bush. "After much trouble I reached the cottage, and leisurely ate my dinner and rested and washed myself. As I could not think of receiving so much from these poor but honest and good natured people without some return I left a half sovn on the table."

Jevons was nothing if not energetic. He had wanted to see the Mt. Keira mine, and feared he was too late. But on the road home he was fortunate to meet and chat with a son of one of the colliers at the pit. The lad saw "with true Colonial sharpness" a chance of reward for leading the visitor to the mine, so off they went together, even though Jevons was "nearly done up." A new track from Mt. Keira Road ended at the bottom of a well-constructed inclined tramway. At the top he found "a gallery, in height about 5 feet cut direct into a splendid seam. It was as yet only about 30 feet long but as soon as arrangements were completed the mining of the coal would be rapidly proceeded with."

At sunset Jevons was contented with his "fine and to me happy and well spent day ... To me, however, in my entirely fatigued and hungry state, a nobbler of hot brandy and water, and a very comfort-
able and neat tea which I got at Russels Inn combined with a soft warm bed were the most acceptable things in the world."

Not surprisingly, next morning he was "far from fresh," but that did not stop him strolling along the beach towards Bulli until he returned to Wollongong to board the 2 p.m. steamer for Sydney.

I am indebted to Professor Ken Blakey of the University of Wollongong for bringing this important journal to my notice. He and Mr. King Bond and I in our respective ways have already done research on the subject, and will do more. As a result, further pinpointing may be possible in the future. For the present, one significant aspect that emerges is the state of coal-mining at the time. Jevons saw what was the very beginning of the Osborne-Wallsend mine, reported by the Illawarra Mercury on 20th April 1857, only days after Jevons's visit. It illustrates what is often not recognised: how very modest had been the first eight years of the coal industry. Even after 1857 the growth of the trade into large export dimensions seems to have exceeded all expectations, and to have surprised the entrepreneurs themselves. At the same time, Jevons did not have time to see the workings of the smaller but higher seam which James Shoobert had begun in 1849 when the first commercial coals were triumphantly escorted into the sleepy little town of Wollongong, made festive for the great occasion. Nobody then really knew, nor, probably, was it realized in 1857, or even for quite some years afterwards, what a truly great occasion that had been.

—Edgar Beale.