surrounded all around three sides of the verandah, from gate and fence, etc.

Sam Smithers was a family friend. He owned and rented many houses in Wollongong. He did not die in Charlotte Street, Wollongong, as they had moved further up the line [the Mercury describes him as of Charlotte St., perhaps they meant "late of Charlotte St"]. After they moved, our family shifted in to their house until my grandmother [Honorah Byron] who lived in No. 2 Charlotte Street, died in 1915 (5 June) and we moved into No. 2. It [the Smithers home] was then sold to a Meat Company as a warehouse.

I hope I have been of some assistance to your History of Wollongong and when I next come down I may get in touch with you and make things a little clearer. My brother, Leo Byron... as an 11 year old boy, while playing with mates in the old foundry, lost three of his fingers in an old machine in the derelict foundry which had been left idle for many years. He has a great recall of Wollongong in the old days and can tell some very interesting tales.

I suggest that the large smelting furnace as described by Mrs. Stuart is the Bessemer Convertor mentioned by Mr. J.M. Bayley and that it was installed shortly after 1907. If this is so I believe that it would have been ordered by William Davies before his death in November 1905.

Peter Doyle

DAVIS, DAVIES OR DAVID

We know that in the late 1800s and early 1900s there were Davies and Davids operating foundries not far apart in Wollongong, in fact the David brothers had worked for the Davies in their Gas Works Foundry in Charlotte Street, before they opened their own foundry in Dennison St. Now a Mr. Davis comes on the scene.

The Illawarra Mercury of 24 November 1882 relates the following news:

WOLLONGONG GAS WORKS. Mr. Davis, an experienced gas engineer, employed by Mr. Montagu Coward to construct the Wollongong Gas Works, arrived in town on Wednesday, and commenced operations at once, laying the gas mains from the site of the intended works in Charlotte Street at the rear of the hospital. From there, the mains will be carried up the hill in front of the hospital and along Keira-street to Crown-street at the Freemasons Hotel and Royal Alfred Hotel, and then down Crown-street to Corrimal-street at the Cricketer’s Arms, again along Corrimal-street and passed the Market Square to the Brighton Hotel near Belmore Basin. This is the course contracted for, and from the mains along the said route, houses will be supplied with gas by service pipes in the usual way. Mr. Davis considers the site chosen for the Gas-works is of the best he has ever seen, and expects to have the town lighted with gas within a few months hence. He now has five men at work, and his son will remain continuously to superintend the operations as they proceed. From the works to about the Market-square 6 inch mains will be used, and 3 inch pipes from there to the Brighton Hotel. It may be stated that Mr. Davis carried out for Mr. Coward the work
of lighting the Royal Arcade just finished, between George and Pitt-streets in Sydney, and that is considered about the best gas lighting arrangement yet completed in the colonies. He has recently arranged a Gas-works at Noumea, New Caledonia, for a company with 12,000 pounds ($24,000) capital, the French Government giving five acres of land for a site for the works and supplying prison labour to the company at four pence per day.

I think a comparison of the interests of William Davies of the Gas Works Foundry, Charlotte St and Mr. Davis, employed by Mr. Coward, (presumably of the Gas Works) will refute any suggestion that they were one and the same person.

A.P. Doyle
Illawarra Historical Society

THE OLD MOUNT KEIRA INN
59 PRINCES HIGHWAY, FIGTREE

Introduction
Early in May a young woman from West Wollongong came to the door of the Museum to enquire if the Society knew anything about an old building located on the Princes Highway at Figtree, adjacent to and just south of the Hellenic Club. She suggested it might be the old Mount Keira Inn and pointed to a number of references in Old Pioneer. After initial research by the author and Joe Davis she was proven correct, and an important item of the built heritage of Illawarra was “rediscovered”. Joe was further successful in locating a turn of the century Photograph of the Hotel, plus a second article by Old Pioneer on Hugh Higgins, the original publican. The photo was located after much intelligent searching by Claire White of the Local Studies Library.

After visits to the site by Michael Roberts and Ray Brown of Bulli, and later Steve Dillon and David Winterbottom, the Town Planner, the building in question has proven to be the oldest surviving colonial period Inn/Hotel in the City of Wollongong, dating from the early 1850s.

Brief History
The Mount Keira Inn was built alongside the old Dapto Road just south of Wollongong around 1846 by Hugh Higgins, a recent immigrant from Ireland. Old Pioneer, in his two articles on the hotel, dates its construction at 1846 and 1851-2. It is possible that both are correct as the building may have originally served as a residence prior to its conversion to a roadside Inn during the mid fifties. Old Pioneer, in a 1924 Illawarra Mercury article, describes its origins as follows:

"...Down at the Main Road, where the Mill Brook [Byarong Creek] crosses the road, about the year 1846 Hugh Higgins erected the Mount Keira Inn. At this period the Inn was a single storey brick building with a deep verandah in front. The building was back a long way from the road, and between the road and the building a beautiful garden of roses was growing. On the inside of the garden a carriage drive passed in front of the Inn."

It is largely in this form that the building survives to this day, though some-