

**OPENING OF WILLIAM (BILL) BEACH PARK, MULLET CREEK, DAPTO — SATURDAY,
11th APRIL, 1964:**

An historic ceremony took place when the site of the original Dapto Show-ground was opened for public recreation as a picnic ground, mainly due to the efforts of the Dapto Rotary Club as a community service project with the practical support of the Wollongong Council.

Several hundred people were present including a number of Councillors and members of the Society when the Deputy Mayor, Alderman C. R. Birch, declared the park open and unveiled a tablet to the memory of the distinguished sportsman whose deeds are now perpetuated. An historical address was given by Mr. W. C. Wentworth, M.H.R. (Member) and a number of the champion's trophies and mementoes were on display. Mr. Harry Beach, of Woy Woy, the only surviving son of the champion, was an honoured guest and many other descendants attended.

During the afternoon exhibitions were given by the Australian Kayak team, who are in training for the Tokyo Olympics, and members of the State Demonstration team of the Royal Life Saving Association.

A roneoed brochure detailing the life and exploits of Bill Beach was presented to the audience and from this brochure the following extracts are taken:

"Bill Beach was born in Surrey on 6th September, 1850, and was brought by his parents in 1853 to this country where they settled at Lake Illawarra, near Dapto. His father was a veterinary surgeon and farrier.

"His rowing career started in earnest in 1880 on stretches of Mullet Creek and Lake Illawarra when he was 29.

"He met the World's Champion, E. Hanlan, of Canada, on the Parramatta River on Saturday, 16th August, 1884, and retired as champion in 1887, after defending his title six times. Settling back in Dapto he became one of the town's most beloved and respected citizens. His interests were widespread and varied, being an alderman of the Central Illawarra Council, President of the Dapto Regatta Club, Trustee of Dapto Showground and Reid Park.

"He died in 1935 at the ripe age of 85, a man whose influence and name has helped to mould and make the community in which we live today."

BILL BEACH'S RECORD AS UNDEFEATED CHAMPION SCULLER OF THE WORLD:

Year	Loser	Course	Time		Distance	
			Min.	Sec.	Mls.	Yds.
1884	E. HANLAN	Parramatta	20	28.5	3	330
1885	T. CLIFFORD	"	26	00	"	"
"	E. HANLAN	"	22	51	"	"
"	N. MATTERSON	"	24	11.5	"	"
1886	J. GAUDAUR	Thames	22	29	4	440
"	W. ROSS	"	23	05	"	"
1887	E. HANLAN	Nepean	19	55	3	440

The old champion's colours, black and gold, are now proudly worn by the Dapto Troop of Boy Scouts.

Tom Clifford, one of his challengers, was also a Dapto man, and it was truly a historic event when two citizens of an obscure country town attracted world attention when rowing was perhaps the major international sport.