

POSTSCRIPTS TO THE SEPTEMBER MEETING:

As one of the many who enjoyed Bruce Pennay's fresh "Approaches to Local History," I would offer these comments on the two problems raised in the third paragraph of the President's report of the meeting:

1. Why did Thirroul play Rugby League? I don't know, but probably because the players preferred the game. The question so put, however, implies that this code of football was the only one played. One theory advanced was that Thirroul was a railway town, but it also had its colliery (Excelsior) along with the other purely mining towns. Another comment was that as the community was predominantly from the north of England they brought League with them. This is fair enough, except that "Association" football (Soccer) is also very strong in northern England (vide Liverpool Everton, Manchester City/United, Sheffield Wednesday/United, etc., etc., "The Big Match" on A.B.C. and "Star Soccer" on commercial channels).

And so it was at Thirroul, which had its senior side until some twenty years ago, and still supports numerous junior teams.

From 1888 to 1928 a knockout competition (called the Gardiner Cup) for senior teams, based on the famous English F.A. Cup, was conducted in New South Wales, the winners being regarded as the premier side of the State. In the long history of this competition Thirroul was the only Illawarra side to win it—in 1928, its last year, their record being:

Defeated Helensburgh 1-0.

Received forfeit from Corrimal.

Defeated West Wallsend 3-2.

Defeated Pymont 3-0 (at Bode's Oval, North Wollongong, the only time the final was played locally).

Other Illawarra teams which reached the final of this prestigious competition were:

1899: Balgownie Rangers, defeated by Pymont Rangers; score unknown.

1901: Balgownie Rangers, defeated 1-4 by West Wallsend.

1910: Helensburgh, defeated 0-2 by H.M.S. *Powerful* (a Royal Navy cruiser on the Australian station).

1924: Woonona, defeated 0-3 by West Wallsend (44 clubs entered).

To-day Woonona is the home of Safeway United and Balgownie is still a major force.

It will be noted that West Wallsend (which won the Gardiner Cup most often—seven times) consistently contributed to the downfall of the Illawarra clubs. In Newcastle football they have retained their popular name, "Bluebells," also borne by Thirroul. The Rugby League club to-day, still playing in blue and white, are "Butchers"!

Incidentally, Rugby League was not played in Illawarra till 1911, and it was only by a twist of fate that the premier football code was not that played in the southern States, transcending marital, political and religious loyalties: Australian Rules!

2. How did Cringila get its name? Again I don't know, but suggest that it might have come from the provision by the Railway Department of a small platform to serve the construction of the A.I.S. works; and the

Railways, known to have a predilection for aboriginal names, might have used the "local" name.

In 1936-37, when the works were well established, a small group of civic-minded men were fighting to have the name of the area immediately west of the No. 1 Blast Furnace Plant (the present Cringila) changed from "Steeltown" (was that ever official?) to "Belvedere Heights"!

If Bruce's was not a rhetorical question, it is a sad commentary that after thirty years a society such as ours, with its primary object the recording of history, cannot answer the question. Therefore I am starting a project—the preparation of a Roll of District Place Names with their derivations. Any assistance will be thankfully received and faithfully employed!

—A.P.F.