On December 19, 1971, the Porter locomotives were finally withdrawn from service. While stored, they were maintained in working order so that they could be immediately returned for service, but the need did not arise.

Two of the locomotives will be retained for preservation. "Badger" is to be placed on show at the Visitors Centre alongside "Wallaby," which was transferred from Lithgow in 1932 and withdrawn from service 10 years before the Porter locomotives.

"Bronzewing" has been donated to the N.S.W. Rail Transport Museum, the Wollongong Branch of which is planning a live steam museum at Albion Park. Track is being laid for "Bronzewing" to be displayed alongside other steam locomotives that have been acquired.

[Abridged from an article in "Kembla News," 14 February, 1975. Information was supplied by Mr. J. L. N. Southern (Foundation Member), whom we thank for permission to reprint].

SNIPPETS FOR LOCAL HISTORIANS:

2.—The giant figtree and the Aborigines.

I confess to having always treated with scorn the old furphy inscribed on the memorial at the giant figtree to the effect that it was narrowly saved from destruction by something approaching a revolt of the aborigines when they found that roadmakers were planning to cut the tree down, which, it is said, explains the curve of the road. That much must surely be rubbish. When the road was put through, such as it was, there was no such thing as a fixed line, and the easiest way was the best. Even now, surely, a modern bulldozer would rather go round than through the huge bulk of the tree.

And yet there seems to be some element of truth in the story, and I for one am prepared to eat my words to some extent. The same excellent diary of Rev. W. B. Clarke to which I referred in the March Bulletin describes this part of his party's route on 6 January 1840, when they left Wollongong for Kangaroo Valley via Dapto: "The road first leaves that over Keira to the right" (i.e. the crossroads); "then descends to a country much like the coal district of England—through a woody region to Charcoal Creek, which is bridged by palm trees, passing an enormous fig-tree at the foot of which old Timbery, a black, was born, and which his people venerate. There is another tree which the blacks say contains the names of their tribe and its history, by some hieroglyphical interpretation of its branches: a real genealogical tree." That tree does not seem to have been preserved; yet that is the one about which they would revolt, surely, rather than one which was by comparison a mere subject of veneration. For myself, I would accept Clarke's observation, but would not draw any conclusion beyond his actual words.

—E.B.