

'AUSTRALIAN IRON AND STEEL' WAS NOT THE FIRST MORE ON THE "LILLESHELL IRON AND STEEL FOUNDRY"

Going through Margaret McDonald's meticulously kept research notes Michael Organ found reference to a Bessemer convertor being installed at a small foundry in Wollongong.

Margaret had received a letter dated October 29, 1979 from a Mr. J. M. Bayley concerning the "Early Industrial History of Wollongong area". This letter is interesting as apart from mentioning a Bessemer convertor it talks about chemist Puckey's plant for extracting salt from sea water but we will leave that for another story.

Mr. Bayley starts his letter by saying "My people used to live in Bourke St, North Wollongong about Church Street, from about 1914 to 1924, and as my father had a scientific background, he took pains that my early impressions fostered this bent . . . I was about 10 years old . . ."

Regarding the small foundry in Wollongong Mr. Bayley had this to say:

Another project, still prior to any steel works at Port Kembla was the installation of a small Bessemer convertor at a small foundry just West of the Sydney - Wollongong railway, most probably with a rail connection, and situated approximately where Beaton Park now stands. The proprietor was an Englishman and discussed with my father additions to the steel melt making [?] for regular product. The little company had a thriving business making cast steel trolley wheels for the many tramways and mines in the Wollongong area. After a period of disfavour, modern technology seems to be bringing the small convertor back into shape . . . Watching a convertor in action is better than any fireworks display. What history have you on this little company? Perhaps you have already published work on them.

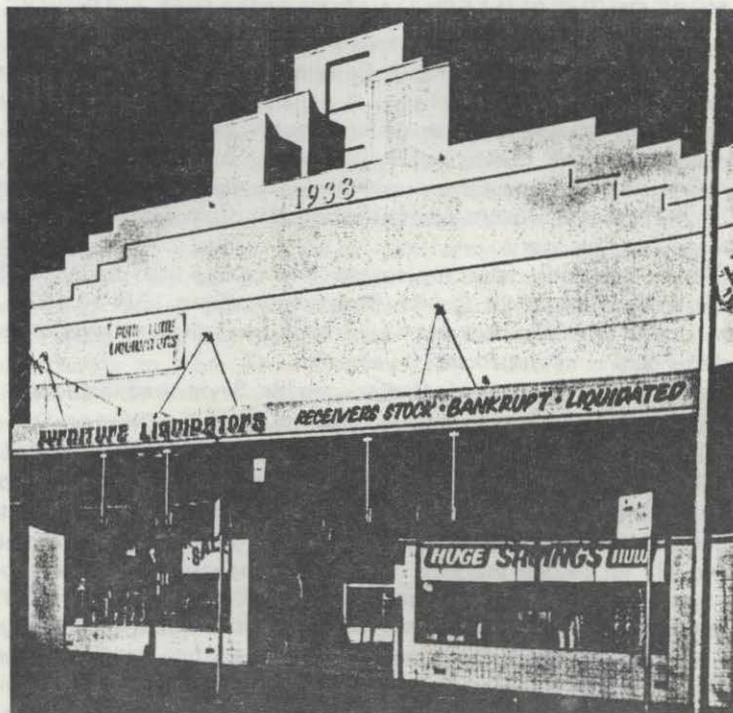
This description of the foundry's expertise in trolley wheels and the description of its location, just across the railway line from Charlotte St, seems to identify it as the Davies foundry and not the David Bros foundry as thought earlier. It is unfortunate that there were two foundries in Wollongong whose owners had such similar names.

The David brothers had originally worked for the Davies and then gone out on their own. Their foundry, situated in Denison St. where Guest's Repair Centre is now, closed down in September 1973 because of lack of work and a decision to go into voluntary liquidation (1). Was this their first location after leaving Davies?

A family historian whose name will not be mentioned did a little sticky beaking and found that a John M. Bayley was registered to John & Mary H. Bayley in 1904. The same f.h. would be interested in any information on the Bayleys.

(1) Illawarra Mercury 20.9.1973. Courtesy Margaret McDonald.

Peter Doyle



A CLASSIC 1938 SHOP FRONT

The Bulletin is shortened this month due to withdrawal of article.