THE STORY OF PUCKEY'S ESTATE

In 1953 the City of Greater Wollongong council resumed for a public park the land described below. (See N.S.W. Govt. Gazette 2 April 1953 for a more detailed description). The conveyance from the Union Trustee Co. of Australia Ltd., executor of the will of Courtenay Puckey (died 27 Sept. 1944) to the City of G.W. Council is dated 24 Feb. 1955.

(1) 40 acres 2 roods, part of 200 acres (Portion 103, Parish of Woonona) originally granted to William Wilson 6 June 1836. It was leased by C. Puckey from Frank Osborne in 1905, and purchased by him in 1909.

(2) 9 acres 1 rood 1 perch, part of 200 acres (Portion 9, Parish of Wollongong) originally granted to Robert Anderson 15 Aug. 1834, and purchased by C. Puckey from Edward Collaery in 1903. (Conveyance 6 April 1904 gives area of land as 3 acres 2 roods 18 perches, but boundaries appear to be the same as those given for (2) in the Govt Gazette 2 April 1953. Possibly, the land was never properly surveyed before.)

The above information is from deeds etc. in Council’s possession. (File C/E/14)

(This is the first item in a series on both the Puckey’s Estate, Mr. Puckey and his children. If readers have any information or anecdotes, please forward them to the editor. We aim to include everything available on "Puckey's in forthcoming Bulletins")

The Discovery and Growth of Greater Wollongong

(continued from last Bulletin)

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

The City of Greater Wollongong is probably more fortunate than most cities in the amount of park space provided.

The oldest reserve is Market Square. In the 1830's the Square was used for cattle sales, also or "stocks" in which the town's delinquents and drunks were locked. Early agricultural shows were held there. It was gazetted as a public recreation ground in 1891. A band rotunda was erected there in 1896 - The centenary of the landing at Illawarra - and was dedicated to the memory of Bass and Flinders.

Stuart Park was dedicated in 1885 and was named after the Premier, Sir Alexander Stuart.

A drinking fountain in memory of Alderman W., J. Wiseman was
erected in Stuart Park in 1918, by public subscription.

Brighton Lawn was dedicated in 1906.

An area known as Dobbins Bush was gazetted in 1913, and the park which was made there was named Wiseman's Park in honour of the Mayor, Alderman William Wiseman.

Other parks since named after Aldermen are: J. J. Kelly Park, after Ald. J. J. Kelly (an Alderman for over 30 years and nine times Mayor at the time of this story); Lang Park and Beaten Park, both in Wollongong; Clowes Park at Austinmer; and Shipp Park, Port Kembla.

Another park in Wollongong is named Harold Cox Park, after Mr. Harold Cox, who acted as Solicitor to several of the Illawarra Councils for many years.

McCabe Park, situated at the corner of Church and Burelli Streets, was originally known as Ledger's Paddock. It was resumed by Council in 1927. The resumption comprised land for recreation, an electricity substation and new streets and drainage works.

In 1929 Council decided to name the park 'McCabe Park' in honour of Major MacCabe, hero of the Mount Kembla Mine Disaster.

In addition to areas provided for recreation and an electricity substation, the Council made available an area for the erection of a hall for Old Age Pensioners and a room for the Red Cross, both of which were completed in 1954, the Pioneer Hall for Old Age Pensioners being erected by public subscription with substantial assistance from the Council.

The correct spelling of Major MacCabe's name is "MacCabe," although the park named after the mine disaster hero is called McCabe Park, and historians frequently spell the name McCabe. The only reliable guides we have to the spelling are the monument in the Rest Park and a portrait presented to the Council by the Borough Aldermen, on both of which the name is spelled 'MacCabe.'

Two large National Parks exist in the area: Garrawarra Park (near Helensburgh) and the Bulli Pass Reserve, which comprises Hopetoun Park (Bulli Pass), Lady Fuller Park (Sublime Point) and about 600 acres of land below Bulli Pass. Lady Fuller Park was named after the wife of Sir John Fuller, Premier at the date of dedication; Hopetoun Park, dedicated in Federation Year 1901, was named after the Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun. These parks are under the control of Trustees.

A large area known as the Cokeworks Paddock, consisting of about 32 acres at Gwynneville, was purchased by the Council in 1951 at a cost of £21,000 and was named Beaten Park. An extensive area of land, comprising
Collaery's Estate and Puckey's Estate, was also purchased in the early nineteen-fifties, and extends from the railway line to the ocean foreshore and from Stuart Park to Cowper Street, Fairy Meadow.

An interesting little park in Wollongong is Pioneers' Rest Park at the corner of Kembla and Banks Streets, one the site of the old cemetery. A special Act of Parliament, "The Wollongong Church of England Cemetery Act," was passed in 1940, enabling the closing of the cemetery and the establishment of the "Pioneers' Rest Park," All tombstones were laid flat on the graves and covered. A memorial book is held in the Council's records, in which a separate page is dedicated to the memory of each person known to be buried in the cemetery. The old cemetery is now a well-kept park, in which beautiful roses bloom profusely.

An area known as "Slacky Flat" (so called because of the amount of "slack" coal which lay on the land, washed down the slopes from the adjacent mine) was purchased by the Bulli Shire Council in 1939, and consisted of 66 ½ acres at £10 an acre. In 1945 Australian Iron & Steel Ltd, desired to acquire about 11 acres of the park, and it was found necessary in 1945 for Parliament to pass a validating Act, under which the council was permitted to exchange 11 acres of park land for an adjoining area of over 12 acres plus £300 in cash. In 1946 an additional area of six acres was purchased by the Council for a bowling green. A great deal of voluntary work was performed on the park by a number of citizens and in 1946 trotting races were commenced there. Greyhound racing was commenced in 1950.

Slacky Flat is now known as the Bulli District Recreation Ground and is being developed into one of the best sporting grounds on the South Coast. There are parks in almost every township and village in the City, also many kindergarten playgrounds. Reservations along the ocean foreshores have provided additional recreation space to the eighteen popular surfing beaches provided by nature.

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The first form of Local Government was established in 1844 when the Illawarra District Council was formed under the control of the Public Works Department. It covered an area extending from Wollongong to Shoalhaven. Wollongong was the first country town in New South Wales to form a Municipal Council under the Municipalities Act of 1858. The Municipalities Act of 1858. The Municipality of Wollongong was gazetted in 1859, Alderman John Garrett being the first Mayor. He was later elected as a member of Parliament representing Shoalhaven and some argument arose in the
Council as to whether he should fill the two positions. The average man does not change greatly in his outlook towards his fellow men, and in 1954 history repeated itself when a similar argument arose in the Sydney City Council.

In 1859 tenders were called for the position of Town Clerk, and that of John Curr, Editor of the Illawarra Mercury, at £30 a year was accepted for a trial period of six months.

The Council's revenue for the year 1859 was £541/1/8, so that the Town Clerk received one-eighteenth of the Council's revenue. Greater Wollongong was paid a signal honour when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, accompanied by His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, visited the City. Thousands of people, not only from Wollongong but from all parts of the South Coast, from the Tablelands and from other distant parts, thronged the streets of Wollongong, cheering and waving flags. The City Council, industries, business houses and many residents did their share towards decorating the City and its buildings.

The main part of Crown St. was covered by a canopy of bunting, which gradually thinned out towards the outskirts of the City. The Sydney and interstate Press stated that the Queen appeared more relaxed on her Wollongong visit than on any other part of the long tour.

This was the first occasion of which the Mayor and Town Clerk of Wollongong wore ceremonial robes of office. The Mayoral chain was procured for this occasion, and on the medallions were recorded the names of the past Mayors of the Greater City: Ald. H. A. Graham, Ald., C. M. Dawson, and that of the Mayor at that date, Ald. J. J. Kelly

With the rapid development of the City the need has arisen for more administration space, and in 1954 the Council commenced the erection of its new administrative building at the corner of Kembla and Burelli Streets, to cost approximately £125,000. The foundation stone of the new building was laid by His Excellency Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, Governor-General, on 31st August, 1954.

The expenditure of the Council for the same year (1954) was £1284/15/9 and the value of rateable land was £14,000. 118 electors voted at the election.

Comparative figures today are: Product of rates £500,000, General Expenditure approx. £1,000,000, Rateable value of property £15,000,000. Electors on the Municipal Roll 53,877.

Wollongong Council carried on its works in rented premises until 1886, when permanent offices were built on part of the site of the old National School. Central Illawarra was proclaimed a Municipality later in 1859, and in
1864 was changed to a Shire. North Illawarra became a Municipality in 1868 and Bulli Shire was incorporated in 1906 when the new Local Government Act came into operation.

Wollongong was proclaimed a City in 1942.

The most drastic change in Local Government occurred in 1947 when the four areas mentioned before, were amalgamated and became the City of Greater Wollongong. The early days of the amalgamated area provide a subject on which I could write a long and interesting story.

The City now comprises an area of 276 square miles, and evidence culled from Government statistics shows that it is developing faster than any part of Australia. Population figures have already been given.

In 1947 the Local Government areas of Bulli, North Illawarra, Wollongong, Central Illawarra and Shellharbour entered into a joint Town Planning agreement. The plan was completed in 1953, and is now in the hands of the Minister for Local Government. At present the Illawarra Planning Authority is working on the preparation of additional information required by the Department of Local Government, and it is anticipated this will take three years to complete. In the meantime the interim provisions of Town Planning are being applied by the Councils, and all development is subject to the approval of the Planning Authority.

LIGHTING

The Wollongong Gas Company was formed in 1882 and supplied gas to the City streets in 1883. The Gas Company is now gradually extending to the suburbs and has an output of over 170 million cubic feet per annum.

The first part of the Illawarra district to use electricity was Port Kembla, where it was introduced by the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company comparatively large generating plant in 1908 for use in its works; it also supplied electricity to staff and employees; residences. The company later supplied electricity for the lighting of Port Kembla streets. The Government electricity generating station at Port Kembla was completed in 1914 to enable work on the Cordeaux Dam to proceed and to supply power to coal-loading plant, quarry workshops and compressors for the construction of the breakwater.

In 1921 electricity was supplied to the town of Wollongong.

The townships of Bulli and Helensburgh were supplied with electricity in the late 1920's. Bulli electricity was supplied from the generating plant at Bellambi Colliery, and Helensburgh from the Metropolitan Colliery. Just prior to local government amalgamation these two collieries were supplying all the
electricity to the whole of the Bulli Shire. They still supply a large quantity of the electricity consumed, although this area is now linked up with the Government Power Station at Port Kembla.

North Illawarra electricity was supplied by the Corrimal Coal and Coke Company, which held a franchise from the Council. The franchise was purchased from the company by the city of Greater Wollongong shortly after amalgamation, for £40,000.

In 1954 the Wollongong City Council is reticulating to its consumers approximately 1000,000,000 units per annum. This does not include supply to Australian Iron & Steel Ltd., which generates its own electricity and pumps some of it into the Government supply under a reciprocal arrangement; nor does the City Council supply a few of the other large industries, which draw direct from the Government Power Station.

A new power station at Tallawarra on Lake Illawarra, commenced in 1946, was opened in 1954, having a capacity of 30,000 kilowatts. The station is not fully completed and its final cost is estimated at £12,000,000. Its full capacity will be 120,000 kilowatts.

SEWERAGE

The question of sewerage, was first discussed in 1860 while the old nauseous pit system was still in existence. The sewerage question was raised many times after that, and in 1908 the pan system was installed. In 1911 the first garbage collection system was instituted. A strong advocate for both sewerage and garbage was the late Alderman Lance, but the battle was a hard one.

It was not until 1929 that the first section of sewerage in Wollongong was completed, and sewerage has progressed very slowly since that time. In 1954 approximately one-third of the town of Wollongong is sewered. Schemes have also been brought forward from time to time for the sewering of the northern end of the City, from Woonona to Austinmer, also Port Kembla. In 1954 the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board brought forward a proposal for the sewering of Port Kembla at a cost of over £900,000 which amount was to be provided half by the Government and half by the council. Two public meetings held at Port Kembla supported the proposal and council has entered into negotiations for borrowing its share of the money.

COAL MINING

Although late in my story, the development of coal-mining in the Illawarra area is the most important part of its history.
In the year 1849 - over fifty years after William Clark set alight the first coal burned by man in Australia - a coal mine was opened at Mt. Keira. The first load of coal brought to Wollongong has made an occasion for great rejoicing. The coal carts, each drawn by two horses, were accompanied in procession by a band, horsemen bearing flags, the mine owner (Mr. Schoobert), miners and other pedestrians. The townsfolk turned out in force. A dinner was held later, at which Mr. C. T. Smith was chairman.

In 1857 the Bellambi Mine was opened by Mr. Thomas Hale, and in the same year another mine was opened at Mt. Keira, known as the Osborne-Wallsend Mine. How valuable the coal mines have proved to the Illawarra district is evidenced by the rapid development of the district into a great industrial city - the third largest city in the State.

Tragedy led to the discovery of coal in Illawarra, and tragedy has visited the mines on several occasions since. A serious disaster occurred at Bulli Mine in 1887 when many lives were lost. The Mont Kembla Mine disaster was the worst this City has experienced and that occurred in 1902. The heroes of that disaster were Major H., O MacCabe, who had been a mine manager, and William McMurray, a deputy. Both men were outside the mine and joined in rescue work, during which both were killed. Ninety-four men who were working in the mine met their deaths in this disaster. A monument to perpetuate the memory of these men was erected near the intersection of Crown Street and Crown Lane in 1905, but in 1937 it was moved to the little Rest Park in Burelli Street.

To-day there are seventeen coal mines operating in the City of Greater Wollongong, producing over two million tons of coal per annum. The probable reserves of coal in the Illawarra district mines have been roughly estimated at 2,177,000,000 tons. Up to date approximately 100,000,000 tons of coal have been mined from the coalfield.

EARLY INDUSTRY

Following the opening of coal mines and the production of coal, it was a natural corollary that manufacturing industries requiring large quantities of coal should come to the district. Manufacturing in Australia was slow to commence: most of the goods required by the people were brought from overseas and most of the coal produced was exported; but as the population increased, opportunity grew for the establishment of local industries.

In 1885 the first kerosene manufactured in Australia was made at Mt. Kembla. A coke-making plant was established at Charcoal in 1888. In 1882 a furnace for the manufacture of iron opened. The more important industries
which followed are dealt with later under the heading of Port Kembla.

The value of good manufactured in the City of Greater Wollongong in 1953 was over £81,000,000.

So far have the flames from William Clark's fire spread.

THE OUTER AREAS

The early history of the Illawarra district has centred round Wollongong because the earliest activities were concentrated around the harbour; however, development in the outlying areas was proceeding, although more slowly. The municipality of North Illawarra was not proclaimed until 1858, nevertheless, a great deal of development had already taken place. It was the opening of the Broker's Nose Colliery in 1883 which gave impetus to the growth of Corrimal. Later on a cokeworks was established there and with the construction of the railway the villages of Corrimal and Balgownie grew rapidly.

The districts of Balgownie and Fairy Meadow were established in 1841 although a grant of land known as Balgownie was made to John Buckland in 1935. Balgownie was dependent on coal-mining and Fairy Meadow on agriculture. Fairy Meadow did not develop into a village but Balgownie rapidly became a self-contained township. It is only of recent years as the Town of Wollongong spreads its tentacles north, that Fairy Meadow is developing and promises to become a thriving suburb of Wollongong. The poet, Henry Kendall, lived at Fairy Meadow for some years.

Bellambi, at one stage, was a rival port to Wollongong and cedar and other commodities were shipped from there. The Bellambi Estate was subdivided in 1842 and a village was planned. A jetty was constructed in 1847. In the "fifties" a hotel, a school and a chapel were erected but the village never really developed.

Spreading from Corrimal during the present century the thriving villages of Reidtown, Fernhill and Towradgi have developed.

Further north still in the Bulli area, there were a number of thriving townships before the end of the last century most of them developing around the coal mines which were operating. It is probable that the land was unsuited for agriculture on a large scale owing to the narrowness of the northern strip.

In 1841 the Bulli Estate was subdivided into small farms and sold. In 1858 a mill was operating and a store opened. A public school was built in 1866, and later in the century the Court House, several hotels, an bank and other stores were opened. Bulli jetty was erected in 1867 and a cokeworks was established in 1881. With the coming of the railway the township centred more round the railway station, and the business centre at Old Bulli faded away.
Bulli had its own newspaper, "The Bulli Times" for many years but in the 1930's this was merged with the Illawarra Mercury.

Woonona, in 1871, had a post office, two churches, a store, a School of Arts, and two denominational schools. Woonona has now developed into an extensive residential area and the largest shopping area in the northern end of the City.

**PORT KEMBLA**

The first jetty - a coal jetty - was opened at Port Kembla in 1883.

In 1898 the Port Kembla Harbour Act was passed and it authorised the construction of the breakwater. Port Kembla was selected as the most suitable site on the South Coast for a harbour, because of its proximity to Illawarra coalfields. Preliminary work on the breakwater commenced in 1900. Further schemes for the improvement of the harbour were later proposed and carried out and the harbour is now the third largest in the State. The 1898 Act authorised the building of the eastern breakwater at a cost of £200,000 including resumption of lands and of some jetties already in existence. Mr. Darley, Government Engineer, had previously suggested a scheme providing for two breakwaters and this scheme was again considered and revised in 1912. The final revision of the proposals in 1937 provided for a larger harbour with a northerly entrance.

In 1900 an area of 496 acres of land was resumed by the Government for industrial development at Port Kembla, but was found to be inadequate, so that in 1913 a further area of 1470 acres was resumed and this has been extended from time to time.

The first of the large industries established at Port Kembla was the Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company, established in 1908. A water supply for the industry was installed at a cost of about £13,600. It is now the largest industry of its kind in Australia. This firm is a custom smelter and refiner of copper, gold and silver ores. It is the largest Australian producer of copper sulphate.

Metal Manufactures purchased land at Port Kembla in 1917 and established works for the manufacture of copper, brass and non-ferrous tubes. This firm also manufactures copper wire and strand; aerial cables; steel core aluminium conductors; and silk, paper and glass-covered wires.

Australian Fertilisers followed in 1920 and commenced production of sulphuric acid and superphosphate.

About the same time the Ulladulla Silica and Firebrick Co. (now
Newbold Refractories Ltd.) and the South Coast Timber and Trading Co. were established.

In 1927 a further stage in the industrial development of the district was reached by the decision of Hoskins Iron and Steel Ltd. to transfer their works to Port Kembla. The establishment of this company was the most momentous event in the history of Illawarra since the discovery of coal. While the coal must be given credit for bringing industry to Illawarra. Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. must be given full credit for the rapid development of Port Kembla and for the phenomenal growth of the City of Greater Wollongong into the third largest city in New South Wales.

When Hoskins Iron and Steel Ltd. chose Port Kembla as the new starting point for their industry, they entered into an agreement with the Government that the company would expend three-quarters of a million pounds in three years on the construction of an ironworks at Port Kembla and the Government agreed to construct a railway from Moss Vale to Port Kembla - a distance of thirty-eight and a quarter miles. The agreement was ratified in 1927, and both works commenced in 1928. The firm was later formed into the company known as Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. In company with other industries, Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. suffered severely during the depression years of the early 1930's but by 1936 trade conditions had fully recovered and the company purchased a further 1685 acres of land from the Government for future expansion.

This agreement with the Government provided that the company should, within five years, spend a sum of one million pounds on the erection of permanent improvements. The company has met all its obligations and during the years of the second World War it proved to be one of Australia's greatest assets. To-day Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. employs about 7500 people and manufactures a million tons of steel a year. The company is now erecting a tinplate mill - the only one in the southern hemisphere - and as this mighty industry grows, so the city it has helped to build continues to expand with it.

(to be continued)