

## The Discovery and Growth of Greater Wollongong

(continued from last Bulletin)

When the permanency of Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. at Port Kembla was established, other major industries were attracted to the district. These include Lysaght's Port Kembla Works, producers of rolled sheets and galvanised iron in flat and corrugated form; Commonwealth Oil Refineries Ltd.; Monier Industries Ltd.; Commonwealth Rolling Mills, manufacturers of steel sheets used in the production of automobile bodies, refrigerators, enamelware, steel furniture, dairy and kitchen equipment, and other products; British Australian Power Cables, manufacturers of power cables, paper-insulated cables for electricity supply and use in mines, and varnished cambric-insulated annealed copper conductors. Many other industries have been established throughout the city.

Scarborough, Wombarra and Clifton were purely mining villages. In the early part of the century Thirroul (formerly Robinsville) was one of the most popular tourists resorts on the south coast, but the erection

of the railway yards, with the continuous noise of shunting engines, made it lose some of its popularity. It is, however, a well developed residential township and has a substantial shopping area.

Austinmer developed along different lines and to-day is one of the most popular holiday resorts on the south coast.

The village of Helensburgh sprang up around the colliery which opened in 1888.

Moving to the area south of Wollongong, it is found that two straggling villages existed in the early part of the last century, they were Dapto and Charcoal (now Unanderra). The old Dapto stood where the village of Brownsville now is. A hotel was opened there in 1834 and the village grew around the hotel. This southern area was given up entirely to dairying. In 1839 a church and a school were opened at Dapto. In 1880 a fine new church was built which still stands; a lovely monument to the last century. Cheese and butter factories existed for some years. With the opening of the railway the village of Dapto shifted south. The new township was planned on sound lines and to-day is a very flourishing town and expanding rapidly.

The village of Brownsville did not develop any further and will, in all probability be enveloped by Dapto as time passes.

Charcoal, so called because of the charcoal kilns, situated there had a school shops and tannery before 1860. In 1860 a post-office was erected and in 1881 the name of the post-office was changed to Unanderra. Coke ovens a butter factory and a hotel existed in the eighties.

The village gained importance in 1932 when it became the junction for the railway line to Moss Vale. The development of Unanderra was slow until recent years but it has now become a large township, mainly due to the extensive housing schemes carried out by the Governments.

Dapto was the headquarters of Local Government in the southern part of the area until 1900 when a new Council Chambers was erected at Unanderra.

The original Tom Thumb Lagoon, now Lake Illawarra, has developed into a popular tourist resort. In 1899 an attempt was made by private enterprise to turn the lake into a sea port. Some work was

done but the scheme fizzled out. A smelting company erected a works between Brownsville and the lake in 1889, but they were not successful and the sole result of their efforts was a badly scarred hillside.

Viewing the Five Islands from the air, they appear as four islands with a small outcrop from one of the larger islands making the fifth.

The whole group is known as "The Five Islands Group".

The most northerly island, that is the one nearest Wollongong, was originally called Wollongong Island, although locally it was known as Toothbrush Island. It is now officially called "Flinder's Islet".

The second most northerly of these islands was known for many years as Pig Island, the legend being that following a heavy flood a pig from the mainland was washed up on this island and lived there for a number of years. It is now officially named "Bass Islet".

These two islands were known as Tom Thumb's Islands, but they have now been officially named "Tom Thumb Islands".

The largest of the Five Islands was known as Big Island, although it was better known as Perkins Island, the name arising from a family named "Parkyns" which lived there for some years, probably from 1866 to 1870. The official name of the island is "Big Island" but the beach on the western shore of the island is known as "Parkyns' Beach". The original Parkyns, it is claimed, was a descendant of Sir Thomas Parkyns of Nottinghamshire, and he came to Australia on a trip, married, and never returned to his homeland. He established his home on the island, from where he engaged in shark fishing - deriving a living from the sale of shark oil.

The southernmost island was named after the youth, "Martin" who accompanied Bass and Flinders. Its official name is "Martin Islet".

The small island, which looks like an outcrop from the larger islands, was shown on Admiralty charts as 'foul ground'. It has now been named "Rocky Islet".

The official names were given to the islands in 1953, following representations made by the Illawarra Historical Society.

Some translations of aboriginal place names in this City are: Bulli, two mounts; Woonona, resting place, sleeping place; Thirroul, valley or hollow; Dapto, home chief; Keira, big lagoon; Kembla, abundant game; Unanderra, junction of creeks; Windang, scene of a

fight; Wombarra, black duck; Towradgi, keeper of the sacred stone; Wongawilli, wonga pigeon.

This is a brief outline of the story of a great City.

Much of interest has been glossed over but it serves to show the extraordinary growth and development of the City of Greater Wollongong in the short space of 158 years since white men first landed there.

The extent of its development in the future is difficult to gauge. The future development of a city can only be gauged by co-ordinating the known history of its past progress with the existing developmental factors, such as the space available for expansion, the raw materials produced in or readily available to the area, and the availability of those services necessary to the particular activities of the district.

The future of the City of Greater Wollongong depends largely upon the progressiveness of its civic and industrial administrators and the industry of its people. One thing we must remember is, that even in this so called enlightened age we are still pioneers of a City in the making. Our country is still less than 200 years old - a short period in the history of a nation - and as the years roll by, the people of the Wollongong of the future, will, no doubt, read of us and ponder on the difficulties of life in our day; but, to us, it is "to-day", and we must live according to the wisdom of our time.

We must continue to work for the improvement of our City and our country; we must be prepared at any cost, to maintain and hold this heritage for our children and their children so that those who read of us in history will say of us, "They did not shirk their job."

*(W.H. Mitchell, South Coast Times - Monday, September 19, 1955.)*