

50th Anniversary of the Illawarra Historical Society

5 December 1994 marks the 50th anniversary of the first meeting of the Society. To mark this special occasion, the Board has organised a number of activities. Firstly, an anniversary dinner will be held on 5 December at which it is hoped a number of people involved in the Society during its formative years will be in attendance. The dinner will provide an opportunity to acknowledge the services of previous workers and look back on the Society's many achievements since its formation in late 1944.

The second major event celebrating our anniversary will be the staging of an exhibition of colonial period artworks by the Wollongong City Art Gallery, set around the theme of 'Illawarra - the Garden of New South Wales', a label applied to the region by Governor Richard Bourke back in 1834. The Gallery has committed substantial resources to the staging of this exhibition, which will be on show between 25 November and 6 January. Works portraying the Illawarra landscape during the nineteenth century are being loaned (at a price) by numerous public and private collections, including the Mitchell Library,

National Library of Australia, and Art Gallery of New South Wales. Gallery Assistant Director John Walsh, and Society members Michael Organ and Ken Orchard having been co-ordinating the exhibition since May of last year. A catalogue will accompany the exhibition and form a valuable pictorial and historic record. Many of the works on show are extremely rare and fragile, seldom leaving the confines of archival repositories. The opportunity to view works by Conrad Martens, John Skinner Prout, Augustus Earle, Eugene von Guerard and many others is therefore not to be missed.

The final project to mark the 50th anniversary of the Society will be the reissue of Arthur Cousins' 1948 book *The Garden of New South Wales*. Long out of print, this 325 page work is considered the most comprehensive and readable history of Illawarra and the Shoalhaven yet published. It covers the period from Cook's discoveries to the end of the nineteenth century. The new edition will include a much needed index.

A lot of work has been initiated behind the scenes over the last year to bring these projects to fruition. It is hoped that members of the Society will support these efforts by attending the anniversary dinner on 5 December, purchasing a copy of Cousins' history, and also visit the 'Garden of New South Wales' exhibition during its showing at the Wollongong City Gallery.

Michael Organ