she was passed for two months to her sister Weeta, recently widowed, who lived in a small brick house in Wollongong, an hour from Sydney. Though Weeta was kind and her grown-up children called in often, Stead felt ‘all but a prisoner. She missed friends with whom she could have a little booze and a chat.”

‘Weeta’ is such an unusual name (it’s supposedly an aboriginal word for the spotted bowerbird) that there must be someone in Wollongong who can remember a neighbour or acquaintance who went by this unusual monicker. Her two Christian names were Doris Weeta (nee Stead) and she was born in October 1913. I would be delighted if some-one could tell me either whereabouts in Wollongong Weeta lived or even simply her married name so I can use an old phone book to track down her address.

The person responsible for inflicting the name ‘Weeta’ on this hapless individual was of, of course, Christina’s father - David Stead. He was a truly fascinating man and a noted naturalist. A member of the Linnean Society at an incredibly young age and an authority on fish in Australian waters he’d had very little education but was a man of considerable intellect. The one thing about which Rowley’s biography convinces me is that David Stead is at least as worthy of a biography as his more famous daughter Christina.

And if you haven’t read either Christina Stead’s For Love Alone or The Man Who Loved Children then I suggest you do (and while you’re at it give Seven Poor Men of Sydney a go) and you’ll find you might gain at least an inkling (fictional though much of that inkling may be) of precisely how interesting it can be to have put up with an ‘interesting’ man.

Joseph Davis

LINDSAY WATERCOLOUR ACQUIRED BY CITY GALLERY

After being pressured by myself and Michael Organ, The Wollongong City Gallery has purchased a watercolour depicting Bass & Flinders and some aboriginal figures.

It’s basically good plain old ‘Bad Art - not only banal, but probably racist as well. Nevertheless, the Gallery’s unlikely to get another opportunity to purchase an early twentieth century work depicting Bass and Flinders.

See it and weep!
Readers should be also made aware that Michael Organ has alerted the gallery on a number of occasions about the availability of paintings with Illawarra content and recognition should also be given to the gallery staff for having the sense to take Michael’s suggestions about items to purchase very seriously. Without Michael, the gallery would be much more than simply a Conrad Martens or two short of local content.

I was also absolutely delighted, having a much greater interest in early twentieth century (as opposed to colonial) Australian art than Michael, that the Deputy Director, John Walsh, took up my suggestion to purchase Adelaide Perry’s ‘Beach Scene’, painted while she was staying at ‘Merrydays’ in Austinmer.

In my opinion it is the finest local work held by the Gallery. I am willing to defend this opinion at some length in a later Bulletin, if necessary, but I would also very much appreciate it we could receive some contributions from readers about their favourite Australian work of art - particularly if that work either has local content or was produced locally.

But the point to remember is that if you know of any works of art with local content that are or may about to become available for sale, please tell the gallery and try to give them reasonable notice so that they at least get the chance to knock back something on offer.

THE MAGNIFICENT TED ROACH

The Illawarra Branch of the Society for the Study of Labour History held a seminar at the Master Builders Club on the 25th February on the Dalfram Dispute - quite simply the most significant political demonstration to ever take place in Illawarra when in 1938 the Port Kembla wharfies, led by Roach, refused to load pig-iron for Japan because they felt it would soon return as bombs.

The seminar was probably the best historical talk by someone actually involved in the events discussed I’ve ever heard.

There were three speakers - Rowan Cahill, Gary Griffiths and Ted Roach himself.

Rowan Cahill, a teacher from Bowral High and co-author of the history of the Seaman’s Union of Australia, got off to a slow start by speaking very generally (but pleasantly) on