OBITUARIES

It is with regret we inform our readers that since the previous issue of our Bulletin we have lost several good friends of the Society:

Mrs Margery Beale, widow of the late Edgar Beale, whom we remember as a regular attendant at our meetings and excursions in years gone by.

Mrs Hilda Harman, mother of our member Mrs Jacqueline Shaw.

Mrs Theima Stewart, sister of the late Mr Bert Weston who was for many years the Grand Ol’ Man of our Society.

SS DUMARESQ

Last week Michael Tracey sent me copies of four photographs of a ship being launched sideways, labelled Dumaresq, launched at Belmore Basin, with a request for more information.

Half an hour at the Local Studies section of the City Library brought forth not only three of the same photos but a couple of others as well, one labelled Steam Tug SS Dumaresq which by the way was throwing out a full head of smoke. The library staff also produced a cutting from the Illawarra Mercury of 31-12-1909. Under the heading FIRST VESSEL BUILT IN WOLLONGONG it reported full details of the launching of the steam tug Dumaresq which took place at Belmore Basin the previous day. The builder was Mr A Settree (presumably the man from Huskisson), “her length of keel is 68 feet, beam 16 feet 6 inches and depth of hold 6 feet 6 inches.” From another source the staff produced evidence that the machinery used in the Dumaresq came from the wreck of another built at Brisbane Water about six years earlier.

C W Gardiner-Garden in The Port of Wollongong (IHS 1959) has a brief reference to shipbuilding on page 6: “In 1831 John Cunningham established a shipyard on an acre of land near the mouth of the basin as it now exists. He built a number of sailing vessels.” In Michael Organ’s edition of Lady Franklin’s diary on page 18 there is a sketch showing the location of the shipyard at that time, about 1839.

After all this 1 much doubt if the Dumaresq was the first ship built in Wollongong, but there is a strong chance she was the first steamship built in Wollongong.

Can anybody help Michael with further information on shipbuilding in Wollongong? If so, please contact me and I will hand it on.

Frank Osborne, 12-2-98