Sesqui-Centenary Celebrations of 1938.

Our region's history can be shown through the words of our pioneers. Whether the information recorded was correct at the time or not, we would like to relate their comments to you. No doubt, many of you will identify with some of these old pioneers and their involvement in the establishment of our city.

Compiled by Carol Herben.

The year 1938 saw the Sesqui-Centennial celebrations of the founding of our nation.

Wollongong celebrated Pioneers Day on Wednesday February 23rd. The day was a huge success and could be classed as a very fitting prelude to the days of gaiety to follow. The following is an edited version of a newspaper report.

The day commenced with a large procession attracting a very large crowd along the route.

The Pioneers and representatives of pioneer families were being driven in motor cars from the Cross Roads (Mt Keira Road) along Crown Street to the Marine Parade. A police car with Inspector Roser headed the procession followed by two Police motor cycles. Then came the Town Band and Beattie's five-horse coach, very emblematic of the old days. Mr Jack Beattie handled the ribbons. On the seat near him were Mr M Kennedy and Mr Cole (Cole's Theatre). Then followed Beattie's first motor bus used in their railway service. This was followed by a long line of motor cars extending from Marine Drive along Crown Street as far as the intersection of Keira and Crown Streets.

The procession went along the Marine Parade and returned to the Town Hall where the Mayor and Mayoress (Ald. & Mrs Lang) and the official party were assembled to welcome them. Others in the official party were Cr McPhail (representing the President of Central Illawarra Shire), Mr Latham (Shire Clerk), Cr. Ryan (President of Bulli Shire), Mr Mitchell (Bulli Shire Clerk), Ald. Gaynor (Mayor of North Illawarra), Ald. East (Mayor of Shellharbour) and Mr Doreen Bolin (Town Clerk). They all joined in extending a welcome to the pioneers who took their seats on the lawn adjacent to the Town Hall. The Town Band was present enlivening the proceedings with music after having assisted in the procession. Mr Dan Makin was the only one who appeared in the old time "top hat".

Civic Reception

When the Pioneers were assembled, the Mayor and Mayoress and representatives of other Councils present took their seats at a table facing them. The Rev. E Walker opened the proceedings with a prayer.
The Mayoress (Mrs W A Lang) declared the Wollongong 150th Anniversary Celebrations open.
The Mayor said it offered him very great pleasure to extend a welcome to the pioneers and representatives of pioneer families. He saw many faces who recalled memories of happy days gone by. He was pleased that so many old people were able to attend and take part in the opening of the 150th Anniversary Celebrations of the founding of a great State. On behalf of himself the Mayoress and citizens of Wollongong he had much pleasure in extending a civic welcome to all present. Mr Davies MLA supported the welcome and said the Pioneers were deserving of it. Had it not been for their very fine effort the people of the present day would not be enjoying the privileges they have today.

The Luncheon
An adjournment was made to the Town Hall Annexe where a very fine luncheon was provided at which at least 219 sat down. The Mayor presided joined by other Mayors, Shire Presidents and Town Clerks. After full justice was done to the good things provided "The King" was fittingly honoured. The Mayor proposed "The 150th Anniversary Celebrations". He expressed his pleasure at seeing so many of the old pioneers present. He also referred to the great development (steelworks) that had taken place in the district with the sudden influx of population causing a housing problem. In former years the town depended on the coal mining and dairy farming for support now these have been supplemented by the industrial works. They were present here today to honour the Pioneers who made all that and progress possible. He hoped that all present would enjoy themselves and would go away with happy recollections of the efforts to honour and entertain them that day.

Cr J McPhail supported the toast. He congratulated the Celebrations Committee on the happy thought which had made possible the gathering this day. He had never felt so proud as he did when he took part in the official welcome to the pioneers. He was what may be termed a 'mid-way pioneer'. He represented his family who had pioneered the district. He gave a short history of the beginning of Central Illawarra.
The Municipality of Central Illawarra was established on 19th August 1859. The first election took place on 21st September 1859. The election resulted in the following being appointed Aldermen: 1st Ward - Ritchie, Higgins and Jenkins, 2nd Ward - Stewart, Garrett and J Lindsay, 3rd Ward - Evan R Evan, Osborne and J Brown. The first meeting of the Council was held at the Illawarra Hotel, Brownsville. Tenders were invited for the position of Town Clerk and Edmond F Smith was appointed at £30 per annum. Forty eight years ago he
(Cr McPhail) was appointed Town Clerk at a salary of £72 per annum and was the only officer on Council's staff. Today there is a staff of 37 and the Council pays thousands of pounds in salaries. All this goes to show that we, of the present day, should be proud of the Pioneers who laid the foundations in days gone by. He appealed to the younger generation to build well upon the foundations laid by their fathers and forefathers. Wollongong was a one horse village in those far-off days. The only means of reaching Sydney was by steamer or coach to Campelltown to catch the train. It was a red letter day for the town when the railway was opened. The old proverb still held good both nationally and individually - "As you sow so shall you reap".

Ald J R East, Mayor of Shellharbour, said that Shellharbour was the first municipality established outside of Sydney. He paid a tribute to the old pioneers, and said that he was descended from an old Pioneer; his mother, in her 89th year, was still alive.

The Mayor said that Mr Alex Fraser, who was born 92 years ago at Albion Park, was present that day as well as a lady from the northern end who was the same age. The toast was drunk with enthusiasm.

Mr D Ritchie (one-time District Miners President and Secretary) responded to the toast, and outlined the progress that had taken place in the conditions under which coal is produced now from the time when miners started between 3 and 4am in order to have coal ready for the wheelers. They came home at 6pm. He was in the district at the time of Bulli and Mt Kembla Disasters.

The star speech of the function was made by Mr James Porter. He detailed the hardships experienced by the Pioneers in the dairying industry, who only received a small price for their butter. His brother and he were the first in the district to use a separator and they received 6d per pound more for their butter than the other farmers as a result. He referred to the hard work of the Pioneers clearing the land and the part the South Coasters had played in settling the North Coast under very great hardships. Pioneers day was one of the happiest he had spent - it had taken 20 years off his age. He referred to the part the Diggers had played in keeping Australia safe for the descendants of the Pioneers, for the freedom and justice, characteristics of the British race. It would have been a terrible thing if the land the Pioneers had established had fallen under the yoke of a foreign oppressor. The Diggers had said that would never happen and said they would fight to the last man to keep the symbol of liberty - the grand old Union Jack - flying in Australia.

Mr Marr proposed "Prosperity to our District" and was supported by Mr Davies MLA who said he felt like cheering the Pioneers who make our present day conditions possible. The toast was enthusiastically honoured.
Cr Ryan (Bulli) and Ald. Gaynor (North Illawarra) responded. Mr R B Bell (Town Clerk, Wollongong) proposed "The Press" and said the function that day was one of the most delightful he had been associated with. Ald Rauch (Nowra), the oldest Pioneer pressman on the South Coast responded. He paid a tribute to the memory of the late Mr Archibald Campbell one time proprietor of the "Illawarra Mercury" and pointed out that when the appeal for funds after the Bulli Disaster was not meeting with success Mr Campbell wrote an article in the "Mercury" which was responsible for bringing the funds up to £55,000 and thus laid the foundation of the Miners Accident Relief Fund. He thought a memorial should be erected to the memory of Mr Campbell whose name was associated with the establishing of Port Kembla Harbour, Stuart Park and many other important things in the district. The Chairman brought a very successful function to a close.

Mr H E Gale Health Inspector for Municipality of Wollongong was the organiser of the Pioneer's Day and received many congratulations.

Official List.

The following is the official list issued by Wollongong Council in connection with Pioneer's Day. Comments and particulars are those of Council and not this paper. The names mentioned are those to whom invitations have been issued. Where no address is given persons reside in the district.

Committee and other guests - Sir George Fuller, Hon E S Spooner MLA, Mr Dunningham (Minister in Charge of State Celebrations), Mr Reeves (Ex Town Clerk Municipality of Wollongong), His Worship the Mayor of Wollongong (Ald W A Lang), Mr R B Bell (Town Clerk, Municipality Wollongong), His Worship the Mayor of Shellharbour (Ald J R East), Mr T D Bolin (Town Clerk, Municipality of Shellharbour), His Worship the Mayor of North Illawarra (Ald W J Gaynor), Mr C T McLean (Town Clerk, Municipality of North Illawarra), Councillor E J Ryan (President Bulli Shire), Mr W H Mitchell (Shire Clerk Bulli Shire), Cr D McAuliffe (President Central Illawarra), Mr R T Latham (Shire Clerk Central Illawarra Shire), His Worship the Mayor of Kiama (Ald C Boyd), Aldermen Kelly, H C Wiseman, W H Hurt, C Cornford, C M Dawson, J W Lee, D Beaton, E J Heininger, F Gray, P C Pryor, Mr A W Harrison, and Mr C E Vormister, Mr W Davies MLA, Messrs M L Dyer, G J Westbury, S Blackburn, A Brickwood, H Robinson, F P Young, R Moore, Campbell, A Lee, J Wilson, J Sykes, H Brown, W Tubman, H O Macgillycuddy, R Dodd, Mrs Wyndham Jones, Mrs Lingman (Sydney), Miss Carotta Boyle (Sydney), Mrs Anderson, Mr R Robson (rep family Mt Keira), Mr C P Frost (rep family), Mrs George Dodd (rep family), Major J S G Marsh (Woonona), Color Sergeant Prince (W'gong) and Inspector of Police Mr Roser.
Pioneers and representatives of Pioneers.

Municipality of Wollongong:
James Frew (77) General carrier, built first boarding house and shop in Corrimal.
Russell James Cook (71) started mining at age of ten years for 2/6 a week.
Wm Westlake Stumbles (80).
Edward Byron (70) Flagman at Flinders St crossing at age 12. Ex Bandsman, ex light horseman, ex fireman, ex artillery man, ex rifleman and ex Rocket Brigade.
Daniel Makin (84) Oldest living male resident born in Wollongong. Commenced work at age of 16 as blacksmith.
James Byron (79) started work on farm at age 9 years, ex rifleman, ex cricketer.
Elizabeth Byron (77) wife of James Byron.
Mr John Croft (77) Started work as a tailor at age 15 years.
William Morris Madden (71) With his father constructed Wollongong Harbour.
James Porter snr (88) Drove bullock team. Won first prize for fat bullock at first Wollongong Show.
Thomas Rathmell (rep Rathmell family) Very old pioneer family.
Ellen E Coombes (rep late Fred Coombes) Mr Coombes associated with early harbour works on the South Coast.
Harry Frank Marr (over 80) Red Gate, Berrima Road, Moss Vale.
Charles Edward Osborne (rep Osborne family) Parents arrived in the district 1829. Property, part of Govt. grant, now occupied by C E Osborne, has been in the family for 108 years. Henry Osborne imported the first Shorthorn bull. Dr John Osborne, brother of Henry, acted as naval surgeon. First ship in 1824.
Walter Web Smith (75) Worked on first jetty built at Port Kembla Harbour.
Thomas Fox (71) Started work in brickyard as boy, 12 hours per day at 9d daily.
William Charles Beresford (82).
Andrew Thompson (86).
Miss H P Tate (rep late Reuben Parsons family) Reuben arrived in Wollongong on 26th January 1838.
H R Ansley (over 70) 79 Old South Head Rd, Waverley.
Mrs H W Bate (over 70) Federal via Lismore.
Miss Margaret Campbell (rep late C Archibald). Archibald Campbell arrived in Wollongong in 1864, proprietor of the "Illawarra Mercury", represented district for many years in Parliament, President of Show Committee for many years.
David Ritchie (75) Petersham. Ex miner's Secretary and ex Alderman.
Mrs Mary Ritchie (75) Wife of David Ritchie.

To be continued
JULY MEETING.

Date & Time: Thursday 7th July 2005 at 7.30 pm.
Speaker: Tony Clapham.
Topic: Vietnam sojourn.

SESQUI-CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF 1938
continued from previous issue.

Pioneers and Representatives of Pioneers continued

T McCaffrey (rep. parents). Mother born at Wollongong 31st October 1843, and is the oldest living person in Wollongong. (unable to attend functions owing to inability).

W J Wiseman (rep. late W J Wiseman). Late W J Wiseman served as an alderman to the Wollongong Council for a period of 50 years. No doubt an Australian record.

Alick H Weston (73). Great grandson of Col Johnston, who placed Gov Bligh under arrest 130 years ago January 26th 1938.

Mrs Harriet Kelly (79). Well known in district for her patriotic and generous assistance to all.

Mrs Norah Howard (73). Enmore Road, Enmore. Born on the area now occupied with the approach to the new Lake Bridge.

Michael Kennedy (79). Carted stone excavated at Wollongong Harbour by convicts to build goal and nearby roads.

Mary Ann Kelly (76). A good old Pioneer who still renders valuable assistance to neighbours and public in general.

James W Musgrave (over 70). Attended first show held at Albion Park. Noted athlete in youth and represented district at centenary celebrations 50 years ago.


A E Woods (rep. parents). Father born Five Islands Road 91 years ago.
Bert Thomas Oswald (rep. parents). Parents arrived in district 90 years ago.
Edith Ann Beatson.
Walter Frederick Orphin (rep. parents). Parents arrived in Wollongong 100 years ago.
Edward Gibson. Born in Dapto.
Fred Sloan (rep. Sloan family). Father - Peter Sloan a great worker for the advancement of Wollongong district.
Clarrie Smith (rep. Smith family). Area known as Smith’s Hill was originally owned by the late Throsby Smith.
Harry Parsons (rep. Parsons family). The Parsons family has been linked with the history of the Illawarra district well over 100 years. The public service rendered by the Parsons family will live long in the memory of others who read the Illawarra history of men whose deeds have been great and sincere.
E Upward (over 70). A man of sterling quality and always ready to render assistance to his fellow men. Well known horticulturist.
Nathan Shipp, R Caisley, T McGoldrick, J McGoldrick, W Oxman, John Souter, J Williams, W Kennedy, James Murphy - all over 70 years.
Mrs E A Cook (over 70). A very industrious and patriotic worker.
Mrs T O’Brien (over 84).
Peter O’Neill (over 70). A man of sterling quality always ready to render assistance to his fellow men.
Jerry Hayes (over 70).
Miss Edie Herd. Rep herd family.
Mr W J Healey (76). Educated Wollongong, and became pupil teacher at age of 14 years, followed teaching profession until retirement, after 51 years service; retired 10/2/1927.

North Illawarra Municipality

John Caldwell (78).
Mrs Mary Ann Gavin (88).
Robert Thomas Benjamin (77). Born at American Creek, Mt Keira.
Mrs Benjamin (71). Wife of R T Benjamin. Born at Bulli.
Mrs R Spinks (83).
Cunningham Caldwell (83). Born at Balgownie.
Alice Clara Caldwell (75). Born at Fernhill.
Mrs C Parsons (81). Born at Fernhill.
Mrs H Coltman.
M Murphy (83). A man of sterling quality, always ready to render assistance to his fellow men.
C Buckle.
Mrs M Carroll (83). A very industrious woman.
Brian Ford (74). First postmaster at Corrimal.
Frank McDonald (80). Closely associated with all public movements for the past 60 years.
J Pratt (86). Born at Mt Keira and followed mining as occupation; very fond of reading.
P McMahon (75). Mrs P McMahon (75). Wife of P McMahon.
Mr A Fraser (93). Born Albion Park; prominent in farming circles for many years and was presented with an illuminated address some years ago in appreciation of his public service for Albion Park district.
Mr Jim Murphy, Mr M A Fox, H W McCauley, Perc. McCauley.
Mr J J McDonough born West Dapto 1864.
Mr and Mrs F James, Mr and Mrs Marr, Mr A J Devenish Meares.
Mr W Neden, Major Doyle, Miss Doyle, Mrs W Cook (Glendalough), Dr W H Cook (Young).
Mr J N King (rep. King family).
Mrs Pat O’Brien. (88), Mrs H Fredericks.

Central Illawarra Shire

P McGoldrick (80). Born at Mt Keira and followed mining as occupation.
R Shipp, John Moran, Mrs Sarah O’Brien, E T Evans, T W Brown, W G Brown, Miss Brown, Miss Denniss, Mrs Geo Dare, Henry Ellison, D Buckley, S Downes, Geo Lindsay (Horsley), James Harris, Frank Nunan, Mrs E Quinn, Alf Swan, John McPhail, Joseph Clifford,
W J Smith, Miss Musgrave, Miss Fitzgerald, Mrs C J Cook, Mrs B O’Brien, Miss Summers, John Barrett, Joseph Barrett, Mrs W Harvey, Mrs B O’Neill, Michael O’Donnell, James Gorrell, Mrs O’Donnell, Alex Martin, Cr S J Cook, Tom Lindsay, Geo Lindsay sr. Chas Lindsay. James Duncan. Born at Berkeley 1866. Ex-Council employee; treasurer of Branch 92 IOOF for period of 37 years.

James McDonough.

Bulli Shire

John Ed Nicholls (74). Born at Jamberoo.
Mrs C Heyman, Mrs Parsons sr, J J Hiles, Mrs E Smith.
Harold Fry (rep. parents). Father arrived in district 77 years ago.
Mr E Smith, Levi Glass.
L Dean (rep. Dean family). Mother resides Smith St, Wollongong; 79 years old. Late father ex-alderman J Dean was a stalwart worker for the progress of Wollongong district.
Elizabeth Spinks, Mr Robinson.

Shellharbour Municipality

Mr John Thomas (76). Native of Shellharbour. Mr Thomas’ father came to the district 102 years ago.
Mr Charles Bursill (76). Native of Shellharbour.
Mr R Lindsay, Crow’s Nest Rd, North Sydney. Native of Shellharbour.

TOUR OF COCKATOO ISLAND.
The Fellowship of First Fleeters, South Coast Chapter, who spoke to us about Cockatoo Island last year, have informed us that they have organised a Tour of the island on Saturday 4th June 2005.
The pre-booked ferry will leave Circular Quay at 10.15am sharp and returns about 1.15pm.
Costs: Adults $25.00, Concessions and Senior Card $15.00. Bookings accepted until 12th May and payment 18th May. Please make cheques out to Fellowship of First Fleeters SCC
Please wear comfortable but covered shoes. Bring drinking water. Bring own or buy lunch at Circular Quay on return. Sorry NO REFUNDS just another date. By train or car, ferry will not wait. For more info ring Jean or Terry Mortimer 4257 5575 or 10 Smith Ave, Albion Park, 2527 or email terryjeanmort@yahoo.com.au.

JH