Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club’s Boat
“Matthew Flinders”

On Sunday, October 27th, the Society joined with the Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club in ceremonies to mark the christening of the Club’s new boat, “Matthew Flinders,” by Mrs. H. V. Evatt, wife of the Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs, and the 150th Anniversary of the year in which Flinders and George Bass made their famous exploratory journey on the Illawarra Coast.

The function commenced with a Civic Reception by the Mayor,
Alderman C. M. Dawson, to Dr. and Mrs. Evatt, at Wollongong Town Hall, where your Executive represented the Society.

At 2.30 p.m. an adjournment was made to the Wollongong Beach where after a speech of welcome to the Official Party, by the Club President, Mr. F. B. Tier, an address was given by Mr. G. E. Ricery, B.A., Councillor, on the historic landing.

Dr. Evatt, who is one of the foremost Australian historians, congratulated the Club on the honour it had bestowed on Flinders.

After the christening by Mrs. Evatt, Mrs. C. E. Burton, President of the Wollongong Ladies' Surf Club, cut the ribbon to launch "Matthew Flinders."

A short history of the Surf Club's boat, extracted from the official souvenir programme is appended.

"Wollongong Club's first surf boat was purchased in 1923, and was privately owned by five of our enthusiastic members, namely, A. H. and G. R. Hanley, A. B. Schubert, N. H. Cheney and L. J. Tuxworth. This boat was built at Cronulla by Mr. J. Hill, and had an overall length of 16 feet, and was Clinker built. She was subsequently sold in 1926.

"In 1930 a second-hand surf boat was purchased from Cronulla S.L.S. Club, and was the first boat actually owned by the Club. She was also Clinker built and was 20 feet long and had the name "Sea Serpent" bestowed upon her. Our first Surf Boat Race was won with her, and after being the handmaiden of all work for eight years, the Club ultimately presented her to our neighboring Club at Constitution to encourage them in the work of Surf Life-Saving. By dint of hard work, in 1938, by the new Surf Boat Committee and the generosity of the public of Wollongong, a modern standard Carvel built boat was purchased at a total cost of approximately £150.

"Built at Newcastle by Messrs. N. & E. Towns, she was christened "Endeavour" by the Mayorress (Mrs. W. A. Lang), after Captain James Cook's famous ship in which he discovered Australia.

"The Club has won many surf boat races with "Endeavour" and competed for the first time in our history at the Australian Championship Carnival in 1944, and again last season. During the War the Club co-operated in manoeuvres and shipwreck rescue work with the Royal Australian Naval Auxiliary Patrol with this boat.

"Her successor, built by the Towns Brothers in the same yards, is of the latest design."