EXCURSION TO DAPTO AND DISTRICT, 18th November, 1951.

In beautiful weather we proceeded along the Prince’s Highway to Unanderra (the Post Office of ‘Charcoal’ was renamed ‘Unanderra’ on 7/4/1881).

Our first halt was at the Berkeley cemetery from where a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside was obtained and the boundaries of the Berkeley Estate (1,000 acres located by Robert Jenkins on 2/12/1816), the site of ‘Berkeley House’, a history of the Jenkins family together with details of other salient points was given by our
President, Mr. J. S. G. Worland. The cemetery was at first a private one and the graves of Jenkins (1/5/1822) and his wife (22/3/1842) with many of their descendents were viewed.

At Brownsville (the original “Dapto”) the stories of George Brown (The Mill, the first Illawarra Hotel, the early ploughing matches), Henry Osborne (Justice of the Peace, Member of Parliament) and William Beach (who brought fame to Illawarra in 1885 by winning the Sculling Championship of the World) were related and on the homeward journey their graves were inspected in the churchyard of the historic Osborne Memorial Church of St. Luke (1882).

The Kannahokka Road was followed to Lake Illawarra and after a talk by Mr. Worland a visit was made to “Lake View” Farm, the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. Fackender, where Rev. Bro. J. P. O’Malley pointed out the various sites of the buildings of the Dapto Works of the Australian Smelting Co.

Our next stop was at “Avondale,” the residence of Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Webb on the Avondale Road, where this fine old home, built by Henry Hill Osborne (about 1860) was inspected. The homestead is situated on part of the grant made to Alfred Elyard on 4/10/1834.

The luncheon break was made in the pleasant tree-shaded grounds of the Avondale Public School (present School House 1837) where hot water was very kindly supplied by the Teacher-in-Charge, Mr. Collins.

The return to Dapto was made via the “Cleaveland” Road (information on this name would be appreciated) and the old Bong Bong Road (about 1820) was followed to “Horsley” the home of the Lindsay family. The property was promised to Lieut. William Frederick Weston in 1818. He died there on 25/4/1826, the grant being formally made on 13/1/1842. The present homestead, a magnificent example of colonial architecture, was erected in the “sixties”.

We continued our way to West Dapto via Wongawilli where among the many features indicated was the remains of the abandoned railway of the Illawarra Land and Harbour Corporation (1895). At West Dapto Bro. O’Malley gave some details of the old Catholic Settlement and a visit was made to the cemetery where among the graves observed was that of Joseph Marceau (9/6/1883), a French-Canadian political exile of 1838, who married and settled in Illawarra.

To all those good people who extended courtesies, large and small, and to the members and visitors who volunteered information the Council offers its sincere thanks for a very successful excursion.—A.P.F.