VISIT OF NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY — SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, 14-15/3/64:

This long looked for visit culminated in the arrival of the “Northern” contingent of 27, led by their President, Mr. F. J. Cane, Mr. F. Gregory, Hon. Secretary, and Miss B. Quinlan, Hon. Tours Organiser.

Unfortunately, they experienced a typical I.H.S. excursion day on the Saturday — mist surrounded the mountains and every time the bus stopped the rain started.

To all members and friends who worked so hard to entertain our guests very grateful thanks, and in particular we mention Mr. Jordan (Mt. Keira Kiosk), Rev. J. Dyer (Congregational Church), and Dr. and Mrs. John Maude (Kemble Grange).

At the special meeting on the Saturday evening a welcome was extended to our popular Junior Vice-President, Roy Grenfell, on his return from his world trip.

THE NAME AND DISTRICT OF “ILLAWARRA”:

In R.A.H.S. Journal, Vol. XXVII, P. 244, the late James Jervis states that “Flinders in his account of his visit in 1796 says — “This part is called ALOWRIE, by the natives . . .”

Macquarie reporting to Earl Bathurst in 1817 referred to “. . . a part of the coast known generally by the name of the ‘Five Islands’, but called by the natives ‘ILLAWARRA’ . . .”

Surveyor Meehan, in 1816, mentions “ALLOWRA LAGOON” (Lake Illawarra).

Other spellings of Illawarra besides those noted above are — “ILLOWRIE”, “ELOUERA”, “ILOURA” and “ALLOWRIE”. The popular and perhaps wishful meaning is “a pleasant place”. Others translate it as “pipeclay” from the deposits near Port Kembla.

According to L. A. Lyons on P. 18 of “Illawarra — The Garden of the State”, the Australian Museum affirms that Illawarra means “high place near the sea”, being derived from the language of the Wodi Wodi Tribe, which inhabited the area between Wollongong and the Shoalhaven River.

The “Sydney Mail” of 21/11/1906 says the word is compounded of “illa” (white clay) and “warra” (big hills or mountains).

A Press item in 1847 said “Sir Richard Bourke, it is well known, called Illawarra the garden of the colony, at the time when her fertile meadows were useless wilds, because her soil is of such a nature as is required for gardens.” (Jervis P. 81 above).

J. P. Townsend in “Rambles and Observations in New South Wales” published in the forties, says the name means “happy valley”.

As it will probably be never determined what the aboriginal actually meant, it appears “you may take your pick”.

The Illawarra district is generally understood to be bounded on the north by Stanwell Park and west by the mountain range, the sea on the east, and the Shoalhaven River to the south. It comprises the local government areas of the City of Greater Wollongong, Municipalities of Shellharbour and Kiama, and the Shire of Shoalhaven. — A.P.F.