PROPOSED TOURIST BOOKLET:

The President, Illawarra Historical Society, P.O. Box 1030, WOLLONGONG. 2500.

Town Hall, Wollongong. 8th May, 1970.

Dear Miss de Jersey,

This Council is at present preparing a tourist booklet which will be available to visitors to the Greater Wollongong area. It is intended that the booklet will be comprehensive yet succinct, and it is proposed that it will include places of historic and scenic attraction, picnic spots with facilities, half day tours from Wollongong and full day tours.

In discussions on this matter, Mrs. E. Mackreth, who is one of your members, suggested that your Society might be prepared to undertake the compilation of a “feature tour” of the Wollongong area along these lines. You might even find it more convenient to suggest both a half-day tour and a full-day tour to highlight the historical features of the Greater Wollongong and adjacent areas. Perhaps we will be able to combine the historical and scenic attractions in these “feature tours”.

If you could provide maps or sketches indicating the exact location of points of interest, and mileages from Wollongong, it would be appreciated.

It is hoped that the booklet will be available for the 1970 Spring/Summer holiday period, and you will realise that this time is therefore limited.

Thank you for your co-operation and assistance,

Yours faithfully,

H. TOLHURST,
Town Clerk.

NOTE BY THE SOCIETY: We have resolved to co-operate and have delegated this work to Mrs. Mackreth. Anyone who has any suggestions might send them to her.

THE ROYAL HOTEL AT THE EASTERN CORNER OF KEIRA AND CROWN STREETS, WOLLONGONG:

With the closure of this hotel on Friday, May 15, 1970, a few notes on its history and some others may be of interest.

An hotel has been located on the site since 1876. The Wollongong Argus of 4-8-76 repored that the licence of the Royal Alfred Hotel had been acquired by Michael O’Brien from G. Duffy.

The hotel was to be conducted by the O’Brien family until 1910 when it was purchased by Tooth & Co. Ltd. for $4,700 following the death of Bridget O’Brien, widow of Michael. John O’Brien, a son, was a Boer War volunteer.
In 1909 tenders were called for alterations, the main attraction to be an “American Bar”.

The Illawarra Mercury of 24-5-1902 reporting the death of Michael said the Royal Alfred had been built on the site of “a very old hotel”.

This old building may have been Hetherington’s Settler’s Arms which “Bangalow” in the Mercury of 6-11-1908 alluding to the Wollongong of 1865-70 said stood at the corner of Crown Street and the Bulli Road.

However, the building may have referred to the hotels which stood on the opposite (western) corner. There were at least three — (1) The Caledonian (Argus 4-8-1876) which changed its name to (2) The Freemasons on 15-6-1878 due to the local Lodge meeting there and (3) Flinders Inn which was The Freemasons reconditioned and re-opened under that name on 29-3-1935. The Flinders Inn surrendered its licence on 1-3-1957 a victim to progress following installation of the first traffic lights.

The Royal Alfred was reported by the Mercury of 21-2-1930 as being demolished. It was also to lose part of its name as when it re-opened it did so as the Royal.

Meanwhile other hotels in Wollongong proper have carried “Royal” in their titles—

“The Royal Oak” of 1836-39 was the first (N.S.W. Archives). Alexander Stewart in his reminiscences said it stood in Corrimal Street opposite “The Harp of Erin” (present Harp).

It was followed by the “Royal Marine” in Harbour Street, opened by Samuel Russell in 1847 and known also variously as the “Marine” and “Marine Family”. “For Let or Sale” in 1857 it became the site of Miss Russell’s Denison House Academy and in 1873 acquired by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan is now the oldest part of St. Mary’s Convent School for Girls.

The “Royal” followed on the site of the present “Oxford”. It was established at least as early as 1864 when the Mercury noted the Licensee as John Hukins “late of the Man-of-Kent, Jamberoo”. In 1882 the paper reported part of it to be occupied by the Post and Telegraph Office, no doubt whilst the second storey was being added to the Museum Building in Market Square.

This “Royal” lost its licence in 1911 as the result of anti-liquor referendum. It became a boarding house but was re-licensed after renovations on 25-8-1916 as the “Oxford”.

Therefore for the patriotic drinker there was a choice of the “Royal” or “Royal Alfred” at either end of Crown Street for approximately 30 years.

The final “Royal” was “The Royal Victoria” opened by Theodore Bode at Fairy Meadow (North Wollongong) on 1-7-1878. Sometime early in its life “Royal” was dropped and eventually on 23-3-1939 it became “The North Wollongong”.

Today as previously noted all “Royal” hotels have disappeared from the inner city, the nearest one today being at Woonona (W.A.B. Territory!).

A.P.F.