In checking the Aldine Centennial History of N.S.W. there is an entry in volume two under "Tenterfield" for Christopher Burgess, born Wollongong in 1854, apprenticed to the "Illawarra Express" and managed at Bega, Singleton and Murrurundi and founded the "Tenterfield Independent" in 1874. This, however, cannot be true as he would have only been 15 at Bega. I am wondering if Christopher was the son of Robert Burgess, who in partnership with Christopher found the "Tenterfield Independent" and sold or gave his half share to Christopher around 1876-77.

Who owned the "Illawarra Express"?

Have you any idea where Robert Burgess came from? R. Pogonoski in the Newcastle and Hunter District Historical Society's Journal for 1950 states that he died in the Ipswich Hospital (Queensland) after an ailment of "some time" in 1889, leaving a widow and three children.

The following newspapers were owned by Robert Burgess:

- Worked at the "Bega Gazette" from its first issue in 1864.
- Purchased the "Bega Gazette" on November 4, 1869.
- Produced his last issue of the "Bega Gazette" on June 30, 1870.
- He sold it.
- Purchased the "Singleton Times" 24th August, 1870.
- Produced the last issue of the "Singleton Times" November 11, 1871.
- Produced the first issue "Murrurundi Times" December 9, 1871.
- Produced the last issue of "Murrurundi Times" c. 1874.
- Founded the "Tenterfield Independent" with Christopher Burgess c. 1874.
- Founded the "Moruya Liberal" October, 1878.
- Sold the "Moruya Liberal" c. early 1880.
- Died Ipswich 1889.

I am preparing a paper on the man as a pioneer pressman.

Yours sincerely,
Ken Sanz.

(Members are asked to help with any information they have. — Editor.)

**DISCOVERY OF COAL IN ILLAWARRA — COAL CLIFF:**

In 1797 white men walked along the narrow coastal plain when the three surviving sailors of the "Sydney Cove", wrecked in the Furneaux Islands near the north-east coast of Van Diemen's Land, and again from an open boat on the mainland near Point Hicks, trudged warily along the seashore, clambered past the precipices of Coal Cliff and Stanwell Park and were picked up by a fishing boat on May 14 at "Watta-Molee". One of the three, W. Clarke, reported finding coal and the report was confirmed by George Bass, whom Governor Hunter sent to ascertain the position of the seam. Bass stated that he found coal in the face of a cliff about twenty miles south of Botany Bay.
The discovery by Bass was made in July, 1797, prior to the discovery on September 15 the same year, of coal at the Hunter River, where Newcastle grew. This is said to have been the first coal discovered in Australia, although Collins recorded that a fishing boat returned in June 1796 with pieces of coal from a bay near Port Stephens.

The Illawarra seam was about six feet thick but cropped out at several places where loading was difficult and it was concluded that it would be impossible to work the seam and extract the coal.

**GENESIS OF WOLLONGONG:**

Cedar trading had been operating in the Illawarra District prior to 1815, but no overland route existed until at the end of that same year (1815), Dr. Charles Throsby with the assistance, it is believed, of Joe Wilks and other stockmen, discovered a track by which cattle were taken to the rich pastures of “Five Islands” from the drought-stricken area around Glenfield near Liverpool. Appin was reached the first night, and it was four days later, when marking a track as they struggled, they reached the top of the mountain range and viewed the ocean.

Very soon afterwards cattle were driven down with great difficulty and Dr. Throsby’s stockman erected a stockade for them near the present site of the Roman Catholic Church and built a hut for himself near the corner of Smith Street.

**ROBERTSON:**

This area was not settled till much later than other parts of Southern Tablelands, because of the dense rain forest brush with which it was covered. When Hoddle in 1830 with great difficulty surveyed and cut a bridle track through to Kiama, he recorded that many of the trees after being cut through, would not fall, being kept upright by the tangle of mass of vines and creepers. A small patch of rain forest has been preserved on the hill south of the railway station.

Settlers moved in after the passage of Robertson’s Land Act (“Free selection before survey”) in 1861. A village was laid out in 1865, and was first called Yarrawa. But, when the settlers were trying to persuade the government to build a road, according to the “Herald” they applied for a rare dose of soft soap . . . for in a numerously signed petition to the Secretary for Lands they have prayed that gentleman to allow the name of the township to be “Robertson” in order that the name of the great benefactor of his species might live forever; and Sir John Robertson was graciously pleased to grant their prayer. (J. H. M. Abbott remembers him as “a terrible, hairy old man, ravingly blastiferous . . . full to the teeth of statesmanship and whisky”. He was opposed to Federation referring to Victoria as “that b—— cabbage-garden”. It is slightly ironic that his name became attached to a district which produces so many cabbages).