restoring it, as far as possible, to original condition — an undertaking in which everyone interested in conservation, history or architecture will wish them success.

* These stories may be garbled versions of the incident at the old house at Wombarra related by Mr. H. J. McDonnell in his “Reminiscences of Scarborough” (I.H.S. Bulletin, December, 1968).

BIDDULPH HENNING:

When he first inspected his land on Bulli Mountain, Biddulph Henning described it as being “as beautifully situated as it can possibly be.

It stands very high, about 1000 ft. above the level of the sea, and you look down over the mountain and see the whole district of Illawarra lying at your feet with the broad sea in front. You can see every vessel that goes to or returns from Sydney, as they keep very near the shore. Although only a short distance from Appin, it is like going into a new country; the trees and vegetation are entirely different. Vines and all sorts of clematis climb to the treetops and hang down in festoons to the ground. Below the tall trees are all sorts of smaller trees; cabbage-trees, palm- and fern-trees. The bush at Appin is quite open, and you can ride through it in any direction; but at Bulli Mountain there is an impenetrable wall of green; you can’t, in many places, get a yard off the road, the vines and creepers are so matted together, and grow so rankly.

“I bought 180 acres at about 25s. an acre. There was some of the finest timber in Illawarra on my land, both hardwood and brush timber. I engaged men to clear part of the land, but the expense was very heavy. The agreement was that they felled all trees not over 6 ft. in diameter, but it left several to the acre over, up to 9 ft.

“I put up a small place at first in 1855, which was afterwards used as a kitchen, men’s room, etc., and later built a nice cottage with one large sitting-room with French lights and four bedrooms, with a veranda in front with a splendid view of the district and ocean. The timber was cut on the ground and the cottage was put up by a runaway ship’s carpenter. It was floored and lined with sassafras, and doors costing £1 and windows 30s. made of cedar. The cedar from a small tree I found on my land. The sitting-room had a stone chimney, which was built for me by a man who had been convicted by my grandfather, John Henning, of Poxwell, Dorset. He did not tell me the nature of his offence. I think the whole building only cost me £60.

“My sister Annie joined me when there was a cottage built. We used often to have visitors staying with us. At that time there was only a bridle-track down the mountain, and everything had to be taken up or down on horseback. We had our horses in a paddock below. Annie and I used to walk down the mountain and then ride into Wollongong.”

Offered the chance of going to Queensland to gain station experience, with the prospect of getting a property himself, Biddulph wrote: — “I had first to sell my Bulli land, which I eventually did, in 1857, to Henry Osborne. He was buying all the land he could about, with a view to the future value of the timber and the coal underneath. I realised all I had expended on the property.”

— from THE LETTERS OF RACHEL HENNING.