G. Charter has disappeared from the roll, and Dr. Timothy Lee is owner and occupier of a house and land in Smith Street.

The Rev. Mr. Charter preached his farewell sermon on 27th September 1885, and was leaving to live in retirement at Croydon a week or so later ("Illawarra Mercury," 29th September, 1885). Dr. Lee’s removal from Market Square to Smith Street, corner of Corrimal Street, is reported in the "Wollongong Argus", 6th January, 1886. A Congregational manse was erected in 1886.

After Dr. Lee’s death in 1919 Little Milton became a boarding house conducted by his three daughters. Miss Isobel Lee, the last surviving daughter, died in 1970, and the proceeds of the sale of the property, which is now in the hands of trustees, will go to charity.

— M. McD.

T. H. HUXLEY AND ILLAWARRA — A Note upon a Non-event:

The more romantic a story, it seems, the less do some historians like to discard it. The legend of T. H. Huxley’s visit to Jammerooh has recently been innocently repeated in our Bulletin.

The earliest account one can find of this is in, of all places, James Jervis’s “Illawarra: A Century of History, 1788-1888” (Journal R.A.H.S. Vol. 28, p. 156). There he narrates how Huxley went to Jammerooh, adding the circumstantial detail of travelling on a buckboard buggy; the young man is supposed to have stayed at the inn, and there met Henrietta Heathorn, his future bride (and what, one may ask, was an early Victorian miss of undoubted respectability doing in such a place at such a time, hard by her own home?).

Anyhow, they fell in love, allegedly met again in Sydney at a dance at Dawes Point, and later married. Yet despite the corroborative detail of the buggy and the Dawes Point dance, perhaps intended, to adapt Gilbertian phraseology, to give an air of artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative, the story is simply not true. One would like to know its origin, because that model of reliability, the late James Jervis, quotes no authority for his statement. And of course he would be the last person to invent it.

On the other hand, we have it on the best of authorities, Mrs. Huxley herself, that she had left Jammerooh years before she met her future husband. In her charming article, “Pictures of Australian Life 1843-44” (Cornhill Magazine 1911, pp. 770-781) she describes her arrival in Sydney, her journey to Jammerooh (where her father was manager of the Woodstock mills and brewery), her life there, and her return to Sydney. Two years later, when Henrietta was a confirmed Sydneyite, H.M.S. Rattlesnake put in at Sydney on her exploring voyage under Captain Owen Stanley, numbering amongst her personnel the dark, brooding but often merry young scientist who, as “Darwin’s bulldog”, was later to revolutionize biological science. It was in Sydney, according to each party, that he met Henrietta, there being no evidence that Huxley ever went to Jammerooh or even that he had any opportunity to do so. But the rest of the story is true enough, how they became engaged and married in England, after a separation of eight years, thereby founding that brilliant family that has added so much to modern science and art.
So the legend is clearly wrong insofar as it concerns Jamberoo, but the true story is nevertheless still a good one. Everyone likes a story of true love, and this is very much the narration of the beginning of a lifelong mutual devotion which might bear telling in a future issue of this Bulletin. Meanwhile, perhaps this note will scotch the legend of the Jamberoo meeting of this famous couple, however regretfully for local historians, and set the record straight once and for all.

E. B.

PUBS, TOMBSTONES AND BIG GUNS:

Sunday, March 25 — and the weather came good just in time for the Bare Island excursion. Though there had been little chance for advance publicity, the bus was comfortably full — you could see the weight lifting from the Treasurer’s shoulders.

Morning tea was at the Camellia Garden at Caringbah. We had been there on the Como trip only last August, and were greatly impressed by the progress since then. Continuing via Captain Cook Bridge, General Holmes Drive and Botany, we turned off Botany Road round a totally indistinguishable suburban pub labelled “Sir Joseph Banks Hotel,” to be confronted with the overwhelming grandiosity (now, worse luck, distinctly shabby and down-at-heel) of the old Sir Joseph Banks. Behind this enormous building of the eighties was a much older building — probably the original “Banks Inn” of the 1840’s — facing Botany Bay.

For well over half a century this was one of the most popular holiday spots in Australia. The pleasure grounds covered 22 acres, made provision for cricket, bowls and archery, and included the first Zoological Garden in the colony. The hotel was famous especially for its professional foot-racing contests. On public holidays thousands flocked to the grounds.

The hotel flourished well into this century — Mr. Tier contributed his recollections of visits as a small boy, and an eye-witness account of one of Wirth’s elephants loose in a neighbouring Chinese garden.

Then it fell on evil days, was delicensed, and is now let out in flats. If it is not listed for preservation, it should be; not, perhaps, as an architectural masterpiece, but as a specimen of everything that appealed to the public taste of the eighties.

The next stop was the Botany (or Bunnerong) Cemetery, historic because to it were transferred most of the remains from the old Sandhills (Devonshire St.) Cemetery, the principal cemetery of Sydney from 1820 till the early sixties. By the end of the century it was “in a shocking state of neglect”. At the same time its southern neighbour, the old Sydney railway station, had reached the limit of unplanned piecemeal growth and had become almost unworkable.

The Government decided to wipe out two blots on the landscape simultaneously by building a new station on the cemetery site. This involved finding reasonably suitable alternative accommodation for the evicted tenants. Botany was selected; tram tracks were laid into both cemeteries; and the deceased, with headstones, moved to their new abode by steam tram. Any relatives still around were offered a free ride with the loved one to attend the re-interment.