WHY MANGERTON?:

Dr. John Osborne, one of the three Osborne brothers who figured prominently in early Illawarra history, received a grant of 640 acres known as "Glen Glosh", which extended roughly from Auburn Street to Cross Roads, and from the old Mount Keira railway to the south end of Meares Avenue and to Union Street, Coniston, taking in the greater part of the area known as Mangerton. The name Mangerton, according to one account, was given by him, after a place in his native county of Tyrone in Northern Ireland; but this Irish Mangerton seems to be a hard place to locate.

Whether or not there was a Mangerton in County Tyrone, there was certainly a Mangerton across the Irish Sea, in Liddesdale on the Scottish side of the Border. The Laird of Mangerton was chief of the Armstongs, one of the most powerful of the Border clans — it is said that in the early sixteenth century he could raise 3000 men.

Traditionally they had gained their name when a king of Scots was unhorsed in battle, and saved by their ancestor, who grasped the king by the thigh and with his strong arm lifted him on to his own steed.

The name Mangerton inevitably suggests that an Armstrong was there; and it seems it may have been so. McCaffrey in his MS notes lists James Armstrong among those who had clearing leases on Dr. John Osborne's Garden Hill estate. If so, it would be an extraordinary coincidence for the name of Mangerton to appear in a district where an Armstrong was an early settler, quite independently and with no connection with him. But it is still conceivable that the same came not directly from Liddesdale but via Ulster. Neither Englishmen nor English beast was safe from the Armstongs; as "Johnnie Armstrong" said in the ballad:

"England suld have found me meal and mault,
Gif I had lived this hundred yeir.
She suld have found me meal and mault,
And beef and mutton in a'plentie."

Between forays over the Border the Armstongs kept their hands in by fighting with, and lifting cattle and sheep from, their neighbours on the Scottish side. Till the end of the sixteenth century the Kings of Scots could tolerate the unruliness of the Borderers who provided "a picket line which could give warning of aggression and yet cost the Crown nothing." But when James VI became James I of England, the Border reivers were no longer serviceable, but doubly troublesome. So James set to work to clear them out. "The Armstongs were hunted down, hanged or deported, their towers 'dinged doon' or left to decay. With the power of their clan broken some survivors left their heritage to settle abroad." One branch settled in County Fermanagh (which is next door to Tyrone) in Ireland, and one of their descendants travelled to a remoter place than Wollongong — he was the first man on the moon.

McCaffrey, after the name of James Armstrong, wrote "(Bedad)" as if it were Armstrong's nickname. If so, he is not likely to have come direct from Scotland. And — though this is pure speculation — could the Armstongs who migrated to Ireland have established there a second Mangerton? and could James Armstrong have come thence to give the name to a third Mangerton in Illawarra?