JUNE MEETING:

Despite uncertainty beforehand as to whether electricity restrictions would permit the June meeting to take place, there was a good attendance to hear the “Railway and other Reminiscences” of Mr. H. J. McDonnell (Member). The speaker was almost literally born on the railway (according to Mr. Bayley, in Clarence Tunnel) and his father’s job as a station-master took the family to Borenore, Narromine, Scone, Scarborough and Thirroul, with holiday trips to Sydney, where an uncle who was an engine-driver provided opportunities to realise every small boy’s dream. Mr. McDonnell continued his career as an Itinerant Vagrant by joining the Bank of New South Wales (for it appears that in his youth junior bank officers had no visible means of support) and getting to know Newcastle, Forbes and Canowindra where his acquaintances included Johnny Vane, the one member of Ben Hall’s gang who was neither shot nor hanged.

The speaker’s lively and entertaining reminiscences of more interesting and colourful days on the railways, and of life in country townships in the pre-motor age, were supplemented by Mr. Bayley’s display of slides, mostly associated with the Lapstone and Lithgow Zig-Zags — the latter having figured prominently in Mr. McDonnell’s story.

THE MAN TO LAY ‘EM OUT

(Two successive advertisements from the front pages of the “Illawarra Mercury”, June 1873):

BRIGHTON HOTEL
WOLLONGONG

The undersigned, in returning thanks to the inhabitants of the Illawarra District for the kind support he received during the past three years at Dapto, begs respectfully to inform his patrons and the general public, that he has now opened those convenient and commodious premises in Harbour Street, near the steamers’ wharf known as the

BRIGHTON HOTEL

Where he trusts, through civility and good attention, to receive a continuance of past favors. The Wines, Beers and Spirits will be found to be of the best quality and brand procurable in the market.

DINNERS DAILY, FROM 1 to 3
Coffee prepared immediately on arrival of the steamers in the morning.
Buggies and Boat for hire

GEORGE OSBORNE,
Proprietor

GEORGE OSBORNE
UNDERTAKER

BRIGHTON HOTEL. WOLLONGONG

Funerals conducted on moderate terms
The Hearse for Hire

(The versatile Mr. Osborne was also the man who met the Missing Link (or was it the Java Ape Man, who has been in the news lately?) at Avondale. His account, published in the “Mercury” on 14 April 1871, appeared in the I.H.S. Bulletin for December 1963).