THE DEMON DRRINK IS A FINE FELLOW:

People of the Victorian age were not all as stuffy and holy as we tend sometimes to think. The point emerges from a letter sent to the Police Magistrate in Wollongong, Mr. A. A. Turner, who valued it enough to keep it. I found it recently among his papers. The writer was apparently an honorary Justice of the Peace who found he could not attend for the hearing of a controversial application for a publican’s licence. The letter speaks eloquently for itself:

Albion Park
August 11th, 1879.

Dear Mr. Turner,

I am sorry that I cannot attend on Tuesday at the Licensing Meeting, but I have no doubt the bench will exercise a wise discretion on the occasion.

There appears to me, however, to be almost an unnecessary leaning, on the part of the bench, and Police of this colony in the meantime, with that species of vulgar fanaticism called temperance, the votaries of which, although so far law abiding are certainly the most intemperate clan in the community, and are more adapted, with there (sic) ever recurring concerts and holidays, to be citizens of Catholic states, such as California before the Mexican conquest, than of an English commonwealth. Believe me the ultimate consumation (sic) of vulgar English fanaticism is Mormonism.

The drinking habits of the people are not to be cured by crusades and repressive measures. The object of primary consideration with all governments, in this respect should be that good drink should be vended to the people, and that the law should at all times be amply vindicated if the people broke it. This is the proper business of the police, not to anticipate crime.

The situation at Bulli in the meantime is peculiar and widely different to other parts of this District. A larger and ever increasing population is fast congregating there, and at the same time a population of very social habits who will have their potations, deny it who can; and it is certainly more beneficial for all concerned that they should have it in the public house under police regulation and discipline. I have lived long in this colony, in days when there were few public houses, and witnessed the worst sort of drinking debauchery under the home keg system, and this is what your colliers would have recourse to, in the absence of public houses. I therefore think Mr. Birmingham entirely entitled to a license.

I remain yours most sincerely,

James McGill

The worthy magistrate was somewhat informal in delivering an anticipatory judgment in a case he did not hear, but few people nowadays would question his earthy common sense.—E.B.

MORE ON MANGERTON:

Our Foundation Member Mrs. Jean Robertson, herself a descendant of Dr. John Osborne, provides us with an extract from a letter from her cousin, Mrs. Betty Trenfield, of St. Ives. Mrs. Trenfield spent many of her earlier years living with her aunts, the Misses Osborne, who formerly lived
at Mangerton and who within recent memory lived in Cliff Road, Wollongong. Many members today will recall the late Misses Jane and Ella Osborne. Mrs. Trenfield now writes:

"I seem to remember, when a child, the older aunts Belle and Edith telling me that their grandfather, Dr. John Osborne, was a great lover of beauty and nature, which was why he chose Wollongong finally as a place to settle, and I think he thought there was some resemblance to the Mangerton Hills in Ireland. These are near the Macgillycuddy Reeks, and are supposed to be one of the most beautiful spots in Ireland. Apparently from the summit of the Mangerton Hills the view is superb, in some directions looking over wonderful undulating country, and in the others over lakes and bays, and finally the Atlantic Ocean. I also seem to have recollections of having heard that Dr. John and his wife spent their honeymoon near there. As far as I know, none of our Osbornes owned land in that area, though I could be wrong".

(Apropos of the view, another member has drawn attention to a reference in the seventeenth-century author John Aubrey’s "Brief Lives" to a certain Sir William Petty, who could “from the Mount Mangorton, in the com. of Kerry, behold 50,000 acres of his own land” — which would put him almost in Henry Osborne’s class — Ed.).

WHERE IS IT NOW? THE "ILLAWARRA FOUNDRY" OF 1863-64:

The closing of David Brothers Pty. Ltd.’s “Garden Hill Foundry” in Denison Street, Wollongong, on 21st September, 1973 severs an industrial historical link with the district. Established in 1896 by David David and his brothers Edward and William, it remained an old fashioned “family” concern which merits a note in these pages.

Its closing, however, prompted a reminder of probably the original “foundry” in Illawarra, the “Illawarra Foundry” of John Byrne at Bellambi which had its brief life some 110 years ago. As with the “Garden Hill Foundry” its story was told by a series of advertisements and news items in the Illawarra Mercury from which the references have been extracted.

Whilst prior to its establishment there were “artificers in metal” in Illawarra, such as smiths (black, copper, tin) horseshoers, wheelwrights, etc., this is the first detailed “Foundry” (i.e. “casting”) set-up noted by the present writer. Obviously situated to cater for the future mining and shipping developments at “Point Bellambi” of Thomas Hale, Henry Osborne and F. P. McCabe in the neighbourhood, it apparently came too soon and without adequate capital, a very common story.

Business began with an advertisement which was to run regularly for the duration of the life of the foundry. On Tuesday 11th August, 1863 it was announced:

“ILLAWARRA FOUNDRY, BELLAMBI. John Byrne, Engineer and Iron Founder, begs to intimate that he has commenced business at the above place, and that he is fully prepared to execute all orders that may be entrusted to him with promptitude and despatch.”

An experience of 30 years in business, and an apprenticeship to the celebrated firm of SHARPE AND ROBERTS of the ATLAS Foundry Manchester will form a sufficient guarantee that orders will be faithfully executed.