MARSHALL MOUNT TO DUNMORE:

Marshall Mount is a place we have been hearing of ever since we joined the Society, or before; but very few of us had been inside. So it was not surprising that the excursion to Marshall Mount, Jamberoo and Dunmore on 4th May was one of the most popular on record.

Part of Marshall Mount may be the oldest—it is probably at least the second oldest—existing building in Illawarra. William Thomas, ancestor of some of our members, was, as soon as he landed in Australia in 1838, engaged by Henry Osborne to work on the building of Marshall Mount. Just about the same time, Robert Menzies was building Minnamurra House at Jamberoo. Which is the older is, as the Duke said (in another connection), “a damned near-run thing.”

The present owner of Marshall Mount, Mr. George McDonald, told us that the weatherboard portion at the rear of the main house has gradually replaced an ancient brick-nogging building which may have been older still; and before that there was Pumpkin Cottage. But the story of Henry and Sarah Osborne demands more space than it can be given here.

The house, which had been the headquarters of an estate of many thousand acres, was a heavy burden for a dairy farm to support, and it fell on evil days. Mr. McDonald and his family have done great work in restoring it. Among its many interesting features particular mention must be made of the staircase William Thomas built, and the extensive range of stone cellars under the house where Mr. McDonald is developing an excellent private museum.

From Marshall Mount we went to All Saints Church at Albion Park (which celebrates its centenary in December) where the Rev. K. Campbell spoke to us on its history. It is a simple but attractive little country church, in whose graveyard many district pioneers are buried. Most of the party also found their way into the next-door establishment, which presented the greatest possible architectural contrast—a startlingly modern church with statues to match: statues in which John Knox himself could not have discerned any breach of the Second Commandment.

Moving on to Jamberoo, we were met by our members Mr. and Mrs. Ross Stewart, who pointed out the site of the vanished village of Woodstock (just north of the Minnamurra and slightly upstream from the present bridge) and took us on to the Church of the Resurrection. After lunch in the parish hall Mrs. Stewart was our guide to the Church of the Resurrection (1867), the mother church of Albion Park and Shellharbour—a Blacket design, rather plain for that master of Gothic detail, but as attractive internally as Blacket’s churches always are.

In a different tradition the Jamberoo Presbyterian church could be a Wee Free kirk in one of the austerer parts of Lewis—an absolutely plain interior, with a massive pulpit in the centre of the western wall.

Finally, to Dunmore via the Swamp Road. The bus could not negotiate the gateway, and it was a warm walk uphill to the house, but no one could say it was not worth while. This beautiful old home and its equally beautiful gardens, maintained in first-class condition by Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, made a fitting conclusion to the day.

All these places demand treatment in more detail and we hope to publish some notes on each over the next few issues. For a start, we reprint
below some notes on Dunmore compiled by Mr. Bayley at the time of our previous visit.

The thanks of all who went on the tour are due to our hosts, to those who spoke to us on the history of the places visited, and to Mr. Maynes and Mrs. McCarthy for their work on the organisation of the excursion.

**A Note on “Dunmore”:**

The estate, originally called Peterborough, was promised to D’Arcy Wentworth on January 9, 1821, but granted to Randolph John Want on May 29, 1861. It was bought in May 1865 by George Laurence Fuller, who from time to time secured additional estates nearby until by 1880 he owned about 9000 acres extending from Lake Illawarra to Minnamurra River and from the ocean west to Croom.

G. L. Fuller was born at Dunmore, Galway, Ireland, on November 29, 1832, and arrived in Sydney with his widowed mother on December 14, 1839. After an adventure in taking goods by boat to the Victorian goldfields in 1855, he entered business in Sydney as a commission agent. In 1858 he owned the Post Office Store at Gerringong and there married Sarah Miller the following year.

In 1860 he bought the store at Kiama conducted by his brother Thomas and Thomas’s brother-in-law George King Waldron, in February opening the Victoria Store on the corner of Manning and Market Streets, the biggest store in Kiama for many years. In 1868 he sold the business to Heydon and turned to his estate, which he called Dunmore after his old home in Ireland.

Arthur Cousins says that G. L. Fuller’s mother, Mrs. Anne Fuller died at Kiama in 1868. He then probably moved to live at Dunmore where, according to Cousins, he built the home at Dunmore after the bridge was erected at Minnamurra River in 1872. Sheltered on the south by a hill it commands an extensive view to the north.

The home, Dunmore, was built of rubble—rough blue metal—the contractors being J. and M. Dinning of Kiama. Stone from the hillside was used to construct the home and its stone walls, the latter being built by Thomas Newing of Kiama, who was renowned for his work.

The building was a remarkable piece of architecture, and there is evidence that additions and alterations were carried out as time went by. Originally it contained four large rooms on the ground level with attics above, to which led a cedar staircase. The ballroom behind the main block of rooms was a spacious one. There were several outbuildings for stables and sheds, also built of basalt rubble.

The grounds were laid out in gardens with a drive winding down to the main gate opposite which the Minnamurra railway station was constructed and opened in 1891, remaining there until 1943 when it was moved to the south of the river where the population had grown.

At that home lived George Warburton Fuller, eldest son of G. L. Fuller, who became a renowned member of both State and Federal Parliaments; being a minister of the Federal and Premier of the State House. Born at Dunmore was Colonel C. D. Fuller who became the district’s most renowned soldier of the A.I.F.

—W.A.B.