HARRY ANGEL'S BRIDGE:

In '43 and the early part of '44 I went to school in a slab and bark hut on the side of the road from Wollongong to Bulli Pass. The school was about a mile from Angel's Bridge. The bridge had been erected over a creek that ran through old Harry Angel's farm. The bridge, which is on the main road, is still known as Angel's Bridge.

Three of my schoolfellows were Henry Angel and his mother's two sons by her first marriage, John and Christy Ledwidge. The mother of those three boys was one of the Brooker family, who had settled in the Illawarra in the early days. There is a peak on the Illawarra range that stands back from the port of Bellambi, and which is not far from Corrimal colliery that is called Brooker's Nose. The name originated in consequence of the Brooker family having settled near the base of the peak, which has a fanciful resemblance to the features of a human face.

Old Harry Angel was one of the eight who formed the expedition that went overland from Appin in the spring of 1824 to a point on Port Phillip Bay, near where the town of Geelong now stands.

In this article I do not propose to give an account of that memorable expedition of Hamilton Hume, which was the most successful work, considering the scanty requirements, ever accomplished in Australia. I write of Harry Angel as the class of man I have known him to be.

Some years past I read a paper which I had prepared for the purpose at a meeting of the Historical Society of New South Wales. The contents of the paper, which was headed "Exploration and Settlement," was afterwards published in the "Sydney Mail" and other papers. In that paper I gave many details of the '24 expedition that I believe never appeared before. These Incidents I obtained from members of the expedition, but chiefly from Harry Angel and James Fitzpatrick, and some details I got from Tom Boyd (who survived all his old companions), and some from William Bollard.

As the road from our residence to the town of Wollongong passed through Angel's farm, and as the residence of the two families stood only about a mile apart, I had frequent opportunities of seeing how Angel cultivated his land and managed his working horses and bullocks, and the plan he then adopted I have not since excelled. When breaking in young horses or young bullocks, Angel did the work slowly and carefully, evidently on a well-defined plan. This shows that Harry Angel must have been of great assistance to Hamilton Hume in managing the horses and bullocks on the journey.

I will here give an instance of the gratitude that Hume felt for Harry Angel. When Angel's step-sons, John and Christy Ledwidge, went to school with myself, in the winter time the boys occasionally brought a pair of bullocks to the school to haul firewood for the teacher. Those bullocks were branded HH (Hamilton Hume's brand), and I heard Angel state that Hume made him a present of that span of oxen, both bullocks being of the best quality.

When Angel went to reside on his station on the Lower Murrumbidgee in 1844, he had frequently, when going to Sydney for supplies, to pass Yass, which was near Hume's home. I have heard Angel state that Hume always expected him to call and stay a night with him. This good feeling remained between those men to the last.

The accounts I heard from Angel caused me to endeavour to follow
the exact tracks that were taken by the explorers. This work was done in sections, and at different times. The greatest difficulty the party had to overcome was to cross the Murrumbidgee when in partial state of flood. In summer on one occasion I forded the stream, which was then less than three feet deep, at the exact spot where the party had had such difficulty in getting over. Notwithstanding his strenuous life, Angel lived and was active to a very advanced age. I believe he lived to ninety-two years.

—JAMES GORMLY,
“Exploration and Settlement in Australia.”

"THE PORT OF WOLLONGONG" MARK III:

One of the Society's best-known publications, “The Port of Wollongong,” by C. W. Gardiner-Garden (Honorary Life Member and former Hon. Research Secretary), has been out of print for some years, during which we have received many inquiries for it. We are pleased to say that it has now been reprinted by the Society, with Mr. Garden’s text unaltered, but with numerous additional illustrations.

The scope of the work is wider than the title might suggest—it is in effect a history of Wollongong before the railway came. Time has proved its value: this is the first of the Society’s publications to go into a third edition—a distinction achieved by few works on local history anywhere.

By a lucky chance the appearance of the new edition coincided with Jock’s seventy-sixth birthday. Congratulations and best wishes from us all!

(Obtainable from the Museum, or from the Hon. Secretary, Box 1030, P.O., Wollongong, 2500. Price $1.25 plus 30c. if posted).

AND BILL'S ON THE RAILS AGAIN:


(More on this later; but, if you haven’t heard of it before, the Pichi Richi railway was part of the South Australian narrow-gauge section of the original transcontinental route).

A SCHOOL FOR CHARCOAL:

A public meeting at the Farmer’s Hotel, Charcoal, on 17th November, 1875, resolved “that it is desirable that a Public School be established at Charcoal”; appointed a committee to further this object, and another committee “to wait on W. W. Jenkins, Esq., to respectfully request that gentleman to grant a site of two acres of land in a suitable position for the proposed school.”

From the speakers’ remarks it appears that there were two denominational schools (denominations not stated) at Charcoal, and (despite much polite verbiage) that they were not particularly satisfactory.

NEW MEMBERS:

We welcome to membership of the Society Mrs. J. Clough (Woonona) and Mr. D. Taylor (Mount St. Thomas).