the excavation site by a nephew who is an enthusiastic student of nautical matters, and particularly of local shipwrecks. We chanced to arrive at the same moment as a T.V. team, so that the workers were fully occupied. However, I had the chance of a short conversation with Mr. Ian McKiggan, the leader of the expedition, who said that they hoped to establish the existence and antiquity of the wreck definitely enough to induce some expert body, such as a University Department of Archaeology, to undertake the laborious and delicate task of excavation.

Mr. McKiggan was, of course, well acquainted with the Santa Ysabel theory. But he himself leans to another—that the ship is a Portuguese caravel, one of a squadron sent out from Goa under Cristovao de Mendonca, which came down the east coast of Australia and round the south coast to this point. This theory was expounded at length in a learned article by Mr. K. G. McIntyre in The Victorian Historical Magazine, Vol 45, No. 4, November 1974, in which there is a sketch drawn from a sixteenth-century map which certainly appears to bear a reasonable resemblance to the Victorian coast from Cape Howe to the Warrnambool-Port Fairy area. The concealment of the discovery is explained by the habitual secretiveness of the Portuguese about their discoveries, plus the fact that Mendonca was poaching on the half of the world in which all new discoveries belonged by Papal decree to Spain. (The dividing line was 129° E, the eastern boundary of Western Australia).

This theory is of more than passing interest to us, for if it could be substantiated it would mean that the first European discoverer of our own coastline was not Captain Cook, nor even Lope de Vega, but Cristovao de Mendonca, of whom I suppose not one Australian in ten thousand has ever heard. Perhaps it can never be proved, for the archives in which the records of Portuguese explorations were deposited were destroyed in the Lisbon earthquake of 1755.

Or perhaps Hargrave was right after all. His contemporaries probably thought his delusions about Spaniards not half as crazy as his delusions about flying. Who knows?

W.G.M.

ANNIVERSARY DAY OR AUSTRALIA DAY?

The Chief Secretary, Mr. Peter Coleman, M.L.A., has written to the Society seeking its views on proposals made to him that Anniversary Day should be restored as the official name of the January 26 holiday in New South Wales in place of Australia Day.

The holiday was known as Anniversary Day for several generations, until well within the memory of older members.

The Council would welcome an expression of members’ opinions on this question, and will seek it at the May meeting.

PAGING NOSEY BOB!

An unusual request from Dubbo, in the Quarterly Newsletter of the Museums Association of Australia: “Especially required is a copy of the book of instructions for the preparation of the condemned prisoner prior to execution by hanging, together with information on Australian hangmen and their names.” That’s something our Museum Committee never thought of—but then our Museum was only a P.O., not, like Dubbo’s, a gaol.