JUNE MEETING:

The speaker at the June meeting of the Society was Mr. B. E. Weston (Member) who spoke on the Weston family. The family, descended from one of William the Conqueror’s knights, in the eighteenth century came into possession of the manor of “West Horsley Place” (mentioned in the Domesday Book) in Surrey.

Two Weston brothers, both military officers, came to New South Wales. William Frederick Weston received a promise of a grant at Dapto, but died, aged only 33, in 1826, before the grant issued. He is buried in St. Luke’s churchyard at Brownsville. The grant finally issued in 1842 to his two daughters, Augusta Brooks (who had married Richard Brooks junior, son of Richard Brooks, the first grantee in Illawarra) and Elizabeth Weston, who next year married Andrew Thompson. The sisters partitioned the property, and on Elizabeth’s half the Thompsons built a house which they named “Horsley.”

George Edward Nicholas Weston married Blanche Johnston, the youngest daughter of George Johnston, who figured so prominently in the Rum Rebellion, and his (ultimately) wife Esther Abrahams, alias Julian, who had come out in the First Fleet to do seven years for stealing lace from a shop. On the voyage out Lieutenant Johnston of the Marines had taken her under his “protection.” Most of these “shipboard romances” were for the duration of the voyage only, but Johnston’s and Esther’s was more permanent. They “lived on the square like a true-married pair” for over twenty-five years until finally persuaded by Macquarie to “regularise their relationship.” Soon afterwards Macquarie granted Johnston 1500 acres in Illawarra, which the grateful recipient named “Macquarie Gift.”

After Johnston’s death this passed to his son David. The latter’s daughter Esther married her cousin, Edward, the son of George and Blanche Weston, and through her, in 1860, the Macquarie Gift property came into the Weston family. Edward Weston worked the property as a dairying and racehorse-breeding estate until 1900. Although no doubt it was the cows who provided the bread as well as the butter, he used to avert his eyes when he passed them. Horses were his true love, and as well as breeding racehorses he was playing a leading part in forming troops of N.S.W. Lancers on the South Coast, he himself attaining the rank of Major, and both of his sons being commissioned in the Albion Park troop. But, no doubt to his regret his times were all too peaceful, and the nearest he got to active service was when the Lancers went to Sydney to reinforce the police in the Maritime Strike of 1890.

His son, Alick Horsley Weston, the speaker’s father, and the speaker’s brother Bruce continued farming in Albion Park, where Mr. Weston was brought up. (His lively stories of Albion Park in his boyhood were published in the Bulletin between November, 1973, and December, 1975).

ANY SPARE GLASSES:

The Society needs wine glasses or other small glasses for functions at the Museum. Would anyone who can help please see Mrs. Pezzutto at the meeting, or ring her at 74-2917?