THE WOMAN IN BLACK:

As I am not a believer in ghosts or anything in the nature of the supernatural, I feel rather averse to jotting down the following facts—for facts they are—and I would be only too glad if anyone could explain them to my satisfaction.

Returning from Sydney on horseback some years ago, I was within seven miles of my home, at about ten o’clock on a bright starlit night, when, happening to look to the left side of the roadway, a little in advance of me, I saw the slim figure of a woman, dressed in black, with a shawl or something of that sort over her head, and her arms crossed. I at first thought nothing of it (supposing it was some one on the way home), but my attention was soon drawn to the fact that, although the horse I was riding was a wonderfully fast ambler, and any ordinary hack would have to go at a smart canter to keep up with him, the figure was keeping pace with me. I spurred the horse to greater speed, but the woman glided along in the same position.

I spoke to her, saying “Good evening,” but there was no reply. I then noticed I could not hear any footfall or rustling sound from her dress.

For fully half a mile the spook (or whatever it was) kept level with me, then suddenly crossed over in front of my horse, and passed down a side road. I pulled up and watched it out of sight.

I have never been able to account for it, but will not deny it gave me a creepy feeling.

Some time after, talking to the Parish Priest, the conversation turned on apparitions. I mentioned my experience, which greatly interested him, as he informed me one of his parishioners had come to him in a great state of fear, and told him he had seen exactly the same thing at the same place.

Some distance down the side road where the apparition vanished on each occasion, was an old white house, long untenanted, which had the reputation of being haunted, and was supposed to have been the scene of a murder in the early days. But what the mysterious figure was, or whether it had any connection with the haunted house, is a mystery unsolved to this day.

—From “Reminiscences of an Australian Pioneer,” by Major E. H. Weston, printed by permission of his grandson Mr. B. E. Weston (Member).

(Seven miles on the Sydney side of Albion Park, where Major Weston lived, would be in the neighbourhood of Kembla Grange. Does anyone know the haunted house?—Ed.).

MACQUARIE’S SWORD:

Commenting on the recent press announcement that the Federal Government had paid $7500 for Governor Macquarie’s sword and dirk at an auction, the Sutherland Shire Historical Society Bulletin asks whether the National Museum at Canberra is the most appropriate resting-place for these relics. Macquarie was called “The Father of Australia”; but the Australia he knew was New South Wales and Tasmania; his base was Sydney, and the future site of Canberra was barely known. As with the “Endeavour” gun that went to Canberra, this looks like one more case of over-centralisation.