OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE KIAMA HARBOUR WORKS

Last Wednesday was an eventful day at Kiama, the Harbour Works which have been in course of progress there for nearly twenty years past being officially opened on that date. All things being in readiness for the occasion, the Government steamer Ajax and the Hunter steamed into the Basin early in the forenoon of the day, each vessel being gaily decorated with bunting, as was also the Dairymaid, which arrived soon afterward with upwards of 100 excursionists from Shellharbour. At about one o’clock the ceremony of naming the Basin was performed by Miss Charles, daughter of Captain Charles, the member for the district: Miss Charles broke a bottle of champagne in the usual way, and in accordance with previous arrangements gave the name of “The Robertson Basin” to the newly opened harbour . . . Altogether there must have been 1200 persons present in the course of the day. Immediately the naming process and the speeches made in connection therewith had been concluded, several gentlemen present partook of an excellent luncheon served on the poop of the Hunter which was tastefully arranged and enclosed with awning for the purpose . . .

In the evening a public banquet connected with same event took place in the Courthouse, Major Black, the Mayor of Kiama, presiding Captain Charles being in the Vice-chair. In all between 60 and 70 gentlemen sat down, the dinner being excellent, provided as it was conjointly by Mrs. Jackson and Mr. G. Adams. In the course of the evening several toasts were ably proposed and responded to, the Hon. W. B. Dalley delivering a most brilliant speech respecting the policy and purposes of the Government, and the tactics and characteristics of the Opposition they had to contend with . . . The proceedings terminated about half-past 11 o’clock. In the course of the remarks made at the Basin and also at the dinner, the name of the late Mr. William Anderson, by whom the greater and most critical part of the harbor works were carried out so successfully, was frequently referred to with evident deep respect, especially by Mr. Moriarty, Engineer-in-Chief of Harbors and Rivers, who said that the unceasing personal attention paid by Mr. Anderson, in all weathers, to the security and safety of the coffer-dam had cost that gentleman his life. Captain Charles, Major Black, and others also alluded in feeling terms to the deceased gentleman, expressing regret that he had not been spared to witness the completion of a work which he had so deeply at heart, and in connection with which he had done so much to crown it with success.

—Illawarra Mercury, 29 September 1876.

(The basin had been started in 1860, about the same time as the enlarged Belmore Basin at Wollongong, and had taken sixteen years to complete, at a total cost of £61,700).

The Kiama Musical and Dramatic Society, in association with the Kiama and District Historical Society, will re-enact the opening at 2.30 p.m. on Saturday, 2nd October (the Saturday of the long week-end). “Miss Charles” will officiate aboard a naval vessel anchored in the same position as the “Hunter” at the original opening. We understand there has been keen competition for the role of John Robertson—described by J. H. M. Abbott as “a terrible, hairy old man, ravingly blastiferous, full to the teeth of statesmanship and whisky.”

Other events associated with the commemoration include a ball on the Friday night, a procession on the Saturday, and a yacht race from Sydney to Kiama, which is expected to finish on the Saturday afternoon. Further particulars can be obtained from Mr. J. Pearce, New Brighton.
Hotel, Kiama, or Mr. A. Glasson, Council Chambers, Kiama, President and Secretary respectively of the Harbour Centenary Celebrations Committee.