amples, such as meetings being cancelled and guest speakers not being informed; guest speaker having to sit through business sessions until after 10.00 p.m. before being asked to speak.

- Guest speakers should be sent an information sheet giving details of venue, meeting format, and facilities available, and (for out of town speakers) suggesting accommodation and offering to meet his expenses. (We have had one in the past, but it may need updating).

- The suggestion that every speaker should be offered a fee aroused some feeling at least in discussions over coffee. It seems that few societies pay their speakers.

Museums:

- With the proliferation of local museums, there is a need for each one to develop a speciality—and to become known for that speciality.

- The speciality may be anything of historical interest (ranging from bullock waggons or farm machinery to bottles or china) but it should preferably be of local relevance. Should a mining museum be our speciality, or is it the Victorian era?

- The speciality does not preclude or replace a general collection, but serves as a drawcard for the museum.

- The officer appointed by the Premier’s Department to assist regional museums appears to be permanently deskbound in Sydney. Regional museums have seen little of him.

—BRIAN ROGERS.

THE BISHOP’S KNUCKLEDUSTER

Bishop D’Arcy Irvine’s sonnet in the April Bulletin recalls to mind a very loveable old gentleman. True, his poetry did not exactly put Wordsworth or Tennyson out of business, but I doubt if he would have wished to, because he was a man of the utmost kindness and gentleness.

Naturally, I cannot remember his days as rector in Wollongong, but my mother was so fond of him from those far-off days of her girlhood that she chose the Archdeacon of Sydney, as he then was, to officiate at her wedding with my father. Yet his visits to old Wollongong were so frequent that I can recall him vividly. Indeed, he had a week-end cottage here, and his continued affection for Wollongong and Illawarra evinced itself in the form of his visits as it did in his poetical outpourings. His cottage, a small wooden structure with a wide front verandah, and known as By-the-sea, was on the east side of Corrimal Street only a few doors north from Gipps Street and George Place. And there the old man used to repair for relaxation and recreational gardening, though he was never so busy that he could not engage in a chat with passing kids, who all loved him; and adults too, for that matter.

Came the time when he was consecrated Bishop. It must have been soon after that elevation that he was spending a few days at By-the-sea. Now, of course, he had a very large amethyst ring, one
of the insignia of his rank. But, since it rather impeded his gardening, he removed it one day and put it on the tip of one of the pickets of his front fence, these being of that old-fashioned type shaped at the top like the outline of a Gothic window. He worked on, his hands as unencumbered as they had been before his consecration.

Later his train was drawing into Sydney Central when he had an alarming thought. His ring was still in Wollongong, stuck on the front fence: or so no doubt he hoped. He caught the next train back. But his concern was all for nothing; he found the ring safely, exactly where he had put it.

This trivial incident is at once a commentary on a simple, gentle person as on the community attitude to him and indeed on Wollongong in general. It is not to be thought that the sharp eye of some passing kid had not landed on a large sparkler reposing on a garden picket, because although the population was small, kids were a good deal out in the streets, not only going to and from school, but going the long way home, or down to some boy’s place to kick the footy on someone else’s paddock, or swing a bat; or for girls to play dolls or whatever else they did. Those were days when children did not even pore over a radio, let alone gaze in a fixation at an idiot box. A harassed mother, seeing her brood still full of energy after an evening meal, would send them packing outside to play until bedtime, hoping that that might quieten them a bit. So a further concession was often won, in the form of permission to go down and have a kick at Smacker Somebody’s footy. Dusks then were no quiet time of curfews tolling knells of parting days; they were times of shouting and running and leaping along narrow street paths, pads of bare earth between tussocks of grass on unmade footpaths between roads that were barely formed. Spotting a bishop’s purple knuckleduster would have been a pinnacle of fun; but nobody would have touched it, unless to keep it in greater safety. After all, nobody even bothered to lock their houses when they went out, and anyhow the dear old Bishop was just as likely to have left By-the-sea unlocked for a week or so before he could come down to it again.

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have shown it to my sister for verification. She agrees with what I say, and adds another anecdote, going back to the day he confirmed her. During the afternoon she went round to the home of old Mrs. Wade, a redoubtable, stern and starched old stick whose mission in life it was to protect the clergy in general and bishops in particular. Looking forbiddingly down her nose, she announced that her guest, the bishop, was having a rest and was not to be disturbed. But the kind old man—he must have been nearing the end of his days then—was not the man to gainsay the wishes of a child, and duly appeared. My sister asked him if he would autograph the new prayer book our mother had given her to mark the occasion, and add the text of the sermon he had preached. Of course he would; the only trouble was that he could not remember his text of that morning; and to make matters worse, neither could my sister. Anyhow, nothing daunted, he wrote a special one for her; and she very much treasures the limited edition.

—Edgar Beale.