Guard's new station, on the summit of Red Point, crammed with the latest technological aids to assist the Patrol in its surveillance of the Illawarra coastline—an outstanding example of voluntary and gratuitous public service.

After a picnic lunch we proceeded to the Wollongong side of the Inner Harbour, where the controversial coal-loader was explained and shown to us by Mr. Graham Evans. Its scale, and the ingenuity which has gone into its planning, were impressive; and probably most of us were surprised to find how far advanced the work is.

A brief visit to the Illawarra County Council headquarters concluded an excursion during which we were never ten miles from Wollongong, but which demonstrated how much of interest there is in our immediate neighbourhood. For its success our special thanks are due to those who gained us entry to places not normally open to the public, those who gave us their time and the benefit of their expert knowledge on the day, and, as always, Mrs. McCarthy and Mrs. Pezzutto, who bore the brunt of organisation and management.

A MUSEUM CENTENARY

It so happens that our September meeting at the Museum will take place one hundred years to the day since the completion was reported of the additions which gave the building substantially its present form. This gives special interest to the following notes on postal services in Wollongong and the history of the building, which have been supplied by Australia Post.

WOLLONGONG

A post office was established at Wollongong on 1st August, 1832. The name of the first postmaster is uncertain; probably he was the Clerk of Petty Sessions.

On 1st December, 1832, Henry A. B. Bennett became postmaster. Bennett was the Clerk of Petty Sessions (or, as he was then called, Clerk of the Chamber of Magistrates) and Registrar of the Court of Requests. It is most likely that he was in charge of the Office when it opened.

As postmaster, he received 20% of the total amount of postage collected. This was before the introduction of postage stamps. The commission on postage was his sole remuneration from the post office.

A letter from the Wollongong postmaster was recorded in July, 1834, complaining that letters were being conveyed privately by boats visiting Wollongong. No doubt, this illicit mail-carrying was interfering with his commission.

J. O'B. Croker succeeded Bennett as postmaster on 1st November, 1834. Croker wrote in 1835 that he intended setting a room aside solely for postal use and asked for some furniture.

It is known that Croker also held the Court House positions,
and no doubt some of the other early postmasters mentioned, were similarly employed.

Then came Edward Palmer on 4th May, 1838; Alexander Elliott on 1st August, 1840; Robert Davison on 1st September, 1841; and Thomas Palmer on 5th September, 1844.

There is a break in the records and the succeeding postmasters are not known. However George Hewlett became Postmaster about 1861, and was followed by T. W. Elliott on 1st September, 1862; R. C. Wills on 1st January, 1870; P. Mackel on 11th March, 1870; and C. W. Prott on 6th June, 1895.

In the early days, Wollongong received its mails both by ship and road. By road, it is known that Ben Rixon took the mails on horseback during 1848 from Campbelltown via Appin to Wollongong and Dapto each day, and between Dapto, Kiarna and Shoalhaven twice a week—all for £255 a year. Rixon had this contract as early as 1838.

An earlier record showed that the mailman from Campbelltown, Daniel Sullivan, was drowned during 1834. His body was found, but not the mails.

During 1856 it is recorded that mails went to Wollongong by steamer three times a week.

During 1861, James Woods had the Campbelltown, Wollongong, Dapto mail service, and travelled by coach 3 days a week, and the other 3 days on horseback. A coach was first used on the service during early 1856. Soon afterwards while coming down Mt. Keira, one of the horses “played up” and the vehicle was kicked to pieces. It is recorded that the Dapto mail cart was intercepted and that it carried the mail bags to Wollongong.

By 1846, perhaps earlier, there was a daily mail to Wollongong. The postage on a letter to Sydney was 8d. The rate of postage varied according to the distance travelled.

**Telegraph:**

The telegraph system was extended to Wollongong during 1862, and a telegraph office in charge of Richard C. Wills was opened on 8th August, 1862.

Post Offices and telegraph offices were controlled by different departments. At Wollongong the offices were conducted as separate establishments for some years.

Philip Mackel who had been appointed to Wollongong on 1st April, 1870, was station master when it was decided to amalgamate the two offices under his control. He was placed in charge of the post and telegraph office on 1st December, 1870.

A telephone exchange was established on 6th February, 1905. It is not known at present how many subscribers were connected, but a sheet telephone directory for Wollongong is held, dated 26th March, 1907, when there were 49 subscribers.
A. B. Bodimeade was shown on the 1907 directory as No 1. Others were: Commercial Hotel No. 2; W. McKenzie No. 4; Doyle Bros. No. 5; A. A. Lysaght No. 6; Wollongong Hotel No. 7; Russell & Son No. 8; Rev. D'Arcy Irvine No. 9, S. Brown No. 10.

The exchange room was only 14 feet by 9 feet.

By the end of 1909 there were 105 subscribers, end of 1915 – 200, and the end of 1921 – 300.

Continuous service was given as from 2nd March, 1905.

A branch of the Government Savings Bank was opened at the post office on 1st October, 1871. For some unknown reason the scheme was not popular at the time, and by the end of the year there were only two depositors.

It is not known when the first postman was employed, but there is a record of one being on his beat as early as 1886.

Following the Mt. Kembla colliery disaster, an inquest was held in Wollongong during 1902. A record was created in the number of press messages transmitted for Sydney newspapers. No less than 406,978 words were despatched during the sitting of the Court.

**Wollongong Post Office Building:**

It is known that in September, 1855, the post office was “in the main street, nearly opposite Elliott’s Hotel”; and that mails were delivered during the forenoon to callers. No doubt this was not a Government building.

By 1876, postal business was being conducted in a Government building. Possibly this was the brick single-storey structure which is shown in a copy of an early photograph held with the post office historical records.

The Colonial Architect in 1880 suggested that a storey could be added to the Wollongong Post Office, and that this would meet requirements. Following approval by the Postmaster-General, tenders were called in 1881. The tender of G. Billings, for £1,375 was accepted in August, 1881, to be completed within nine months. The completion of the additions was reported on 1st September, 1882.

The erection of a dwarf wall and iron railings in front of the building was approved in March, 1883.

In 1888, when F. Woodward, M.P., suggested that a new office be built and the old one sold, approval was given for this to be done. It was then pointed out that suitable ground, next to the Town Hall, was available. This belonged to the Education Department, and it was only after very lengthy and complicated negotiations that the land was transferred, at a cost of £900.

The tender by Banks & Whitehurst for £2,953 was accepted, and the new building was occupied late in 1892. The old post office building was taken over by the Wollongong Harbour Trust.

While the new building was in course of erection, some additional ground at the rear of the building was acquired, mainly to assist in the drainage.