OUR SOCIETY’S TREASURE

Members will be aware that this Society’s collection of old records, pictures, photographs, books, articles and memorabilia, having begun after foundation over forty years ago, has now grown into a priceless asset for posterity. To this may be added the Museum collection, which was being assembled many years before its opening in 1966. The overall result is that, although many an item was destroyed before we could lay preserving hands upon it, much has been saved; and the collection continues to grow. Moreover, by reason of our excellent working arrangement with the City Library, our collection as well as the Library’s own is available to the public.

But what may not be so well known amongst members is that generous donors many years ago gave us some books which are so valuable that they are kept in a safe custody with our bankers. The three most valuable are Lycett’s Views in Australia (1824), a Dutch reproduction of the journals of Tasman’s Voyages, and Westmacott’s Sketches in Australia (1848). To be sure, only the third-named has any local content, so that we could sell the others and enrich our funds by a very pretty penny indeed. But the problem is not so easily solved.

Wealth of this nature carries care and responsibility. The point is that these are appreciating assets, and the appreciation over the years has been quite spectacular. The Council has often discussed the question: to sell or not to sell? But the answer has always been in the negative, because the price can only go one way: namely, up. The top price of today will assuredly look silly only a few years onwards. Although it perhaps would be different if we had some great project in view, we have none in the short or long term. So why sell now? Meanwhile, members will be pleased to realize that although we scratch along on the minimum practicable subscription, and conserve our funds with Scrooge-like effectiveness, we are indeed a Society rich in assets if not cash, and potentially richer again taking into account these hidden treasures.

Hidden? Perhaps one meeting night we will table them for careful inspection by members.

E.B.

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION APPOINTMENTS

We congratulate Mrs. J. McCarthy (Museum Curator) and Miss B. McDermott (Hon. Secretary) on their appointments as President and Secretary-Treasurer respectively of the Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter of the Museums Association of Australia Incorporated (N.S.W. Branch), but we hope these new responsibilities will not make too great demands on their time and energy.

We can’t spare them!

NATIONAL TRUST CLASSIFICATIONS – ILLAWARRA CEMETERIES

The June 1986 issue of the National Trust Magazine lists under “Recent Classifications” several Illawarra district cemeteries.


The accompanying citations, which briefly set out the claims of each to classification, it seems there is more interest in local cemeteries than most of us realised.