BOOK REVIEW

BUSTLE SMITH  The life and times of Charles Throsby Smith
First settler and pioneer of Wollongong
52 pages on A4 paper.

By Dick Monks, 22 Darval St., Naremburn NSW 2065
Obtainable from the author for $10 including postage.

In preparation for the reunion of descendants of Charles Throsby Smith, held in Wollongong's Market Square on 1st March, 1998, Dick Monks has written this history of his pioneer forebear.

This is a well researched and copiously annotated story of the life of CTS which is followed by extensive family-tree branches listing his descendants.

The story begins with Charles' ancestors in England, where he was born at Cambridge in 1798. It details the unsettled nature of his childhood after his father died when he was but two years old, and his teenage ambition to join his elder brother in the service of the East India Company. It was his unsuccessful struggle to reach India in 1814 at the age of 16 that brought him to Australia instead of India and to the patronage of his uncle, Dr Charles Throsby. It is a really interesting story of an adventurous young man who, following estrangement from his uncle, decided to go it alone on a grant which became the nucleus of Wollongong.

Despite the obvious quality of the book, there are a few inaccuracies which may trouble the local reader, sometimes caused by mixing the generations in such a large number of relatives, at others times by confusing the historical background. For example, on page 25 he has Charles' second daughter Maria married to an Osborne but it should have been a Turner: it was Maria Turner's daughter Clara, known as Jean, who married John Douglass (yes, ss) Osborne. Continuing the error, on page 26 he lists that same Jean, who has lost her first husband (Beale) and become Jean Robertson, as Charles' granddaughter when she was really his great-granddaughter. On the historical front, Governor Franklin was not able to accompany his wife on a visit to Bustle Farm as said Governor was at home in Hobart at the time (page 17); and on page 4 the Napoleonic wars may have intruded on Charles' passage to India in 1814 but the American War Of Independence certainly did not: that war finished in 1782.

The family-tree section of the book is comprehensive, occupying 18 pages of very small
type with more than 100 names on some pages. The sheer quantity of material on these pages reflects an enormous effort on somebody's part, but the type is so small and sometimes tucked into the margin that it is difficult to read and some pages would be impossible to photocopy. But the book is well worth buying, so why resort to photocopying?
Apart from minor glitches, which after all are almost non-existent when compared to our own Bulletin, this book is a very worthwhile account of Wollongong's foremost pioneer.

Frank Osborne

Also by the same author:
South Flowing Water is Thicker than Blood, C T Smith's brief career as an explorer. From the same address and at the same price, $10 including postage.

HIDDEN TREASURE

Wollongong's First Customs House

Recently, on my way to photograph some threatened buildings on Cliff Road (numbers 54 to 64) I decided to deviate into the grounds of the old court house (opened 1858) to see if the even older customs house was still there behind all the paraphernalia that clutters the grounds these days.

There it was indeed, with its hardwood weather boards partly covered with peeling paint but its every physical detail identical with the lonely building perched on the edge of Brighton Beach as shown in an etching labelled Wollongong Harbourside in the 1880s which has appeared in a number of publications. It may be found on page 39 of the Society's publication Port of Wollongong, second edition, 1975; in Plate 44 in the Wyewurry Greetings from Wollongong, 1995; and on page 46 of the IHS Bulletin, August-September 1997. This Bulletin also contained a sketch from a survey dated 1885 which showed the original location of the customs house quite close to the present kiosk.

In this picture we see a small wooden, hip-roofed building with an eastern verandah onto which opens a front door. At the western end is a chimney and along the side facing the beach is another window in the centre of the wall. The building behind the old court house has all these features except the verandah, but if one looks closely there are still two notches in the weatherboards where the narrow verandah was attached, just above door level. One of these notches is now partially obscured by a downpipe but still