



# ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPONSORED BY ROCKDALE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

81 Watkin Street,  
BEXLEY: 2207

8th May, 1970.

Dear Friend and Member,

The May meeting of the above Society will be held as follows:-

- Date. Friday Evening next, 15th May, 1970 at 8 p. m.
- Place. Council Chambers, Town Hall, Princes Highway, Rockdale.
- Guest Speaker. We look forward to having with us Mr. A. Brigden - former resident of Gulgong now residing at Parramatta, who will act as Guide for our long weekend venture to Wellington and Gulgong in October. Mr. Brigden will show slides and with the aid of an "Epidiascope" project a collection of Historic Photos of "The Early Days of Gulgong - The Town on the \$10 Note."
- Business. General.

Would lady members please bring a plate.

D. H. Sinclair.

(Miss) J. Noble.

President.

Hon. Secretary.

Supper Roster.

Miss Binns (Capt.) Mrs. Warlow-Davies, Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Amy, Mrs. I. Smith and Mrs. Thorp.

## DATES TO REMEMBER FOR FUTURE OUTINGS

Bookings may be made by ringing Mr.  
Don Sinclair 587.4555.

It would be appreciated for members attending outings to display the Society's Badge. Members wishing to purchase Badges, they are available from the Treasurer, Mr. Callister at 65c each.

### MAY 17 - SUNDAY. COBBITTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS. full day.

Visiting "St. Paul's" Church of England, Cobbitty to attend the 11 a.m. service in this lovely old Historic Church.

Lunch will be partaken in the Church Hall after the Service, followed by a guided tour of surrounding countryside, with afternoon tea at Burragorang Valley Lookout.

Cost \$1.50. Bring morning, afternoon teas and lunch. Hot water will be available at the Church Hall for Lunch.  
Leaving Rockdale Town Hall at 9 a.m. SHARP.

### JULY 25 - SATURDAY AFTERNOON. TOUR OF FORT DENISON.

Bookings should be made as soon as possible - limited to 25 persons.

Details and cost will be published later.

### OCTOBER 3, 4 and 5 - SATURDAY TO MONDAY.

#### LONG WEEKEND OUTING TO GULGONG.

Reservations have been completed, but for those who still may be interested a waiting list is being taken for any possible cancellation.

Please hand name to Secretary. Cost \$25. Limited 44.

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Members are also reminded that copies of the Society's publications are available from the Secretary at 65 cents per copy.

- Book 1. "The Early History - The Wolli Creek Valley." G. Eardley.
- Book 2. "The Kogarah to Sans Souci Tramway." G. Eardley.
- Book 3. "Thomas Saywells Tramway. 1887-1914 - Rockdale to Lady Robinson Beach." G. Eardley.
- Book 4. "The Arncliffe to Bexley Steam Tramway." G. Eardley.
- Book 5. Copies of the Society's latest edition entitled "Heritage in Stone. District of St. George." Described and Illustrated dealing with some twenty sand-stone

buildings which at one time or another have graced  
our St. George District. Approx. cost 70c.  
Available at an early date.

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The Members of the St. George Historical Society and Visitors  
appreciate greatly the illustrated address given by Sister Catherine  
O'Carrigan at the meeting held on Friday evening last, April 17, when  
some 87 persons were present.

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### PILGRIMAGE TO KURNELL.

J. Noble.

A group of Members of the Society set out in high spirits on  
Saturday for a visit to Kurnell, the birthplace of Australia, almost 200  
years after that Historic landing by Capt. Cook and his party.

On arrival at Kurnell we journeyed along the scenic drive follow-  
ing the cliff line to Cape Solander, viewing the aweinspiring and majestic  
coastline.

Lunch was partaken picnic style under picturesque trees and  
velvet lawns, after which members set out on a "Historic Walk" following  
the shore line, passing Inscription Point, the memorials of Seaman Forby  
Sutherland, the some what remodelled "Watering Place" where, nearby  
it was said, that the Endeavour's name and date was carved into a tree  
trunk. Along past Sir Joseph Banks memorial and then pausing to view  
at close hand the "Bark Canoes, Longboat and Pinnacle" which, we were  
told by the longboat's coxswain Leading Seaman Hillsdon would be used to  
re-enact the landing on Wednesday, 29th April, 1970.

Rock stepping across then, to stand almost where Midshipman  
Issac Smith first jumped ashore 200 years ago to a view that probably  
beset Cook and his party, the tree covered shoreline where now the  
Capt. Cook Obelisk stands to commemorate this Historic event. The  
Obelisk was built by Thomas Holt at his own expense in 1870, to  
commemorate the centenary. Thomas Holt was the State's first Colonial  
Treasurer, and termed, "the father of the Sutherland Shire."

Our journey to Kurnell would not be complete without a visit  
to the Museum, which contains a collection of Cook relics, species of  
wild flowers, shells and stuffed birds.

Our party was most grateful to Mrs. Hogg a member of this  
Society now living at Kurnell, for organising a visit to view a ship being  
built by a young couple to realise a dream to sail the world, and also  
entertaining us with the help of the Ladies of the C. W. A. with afternoon  
tea in the Marton Hall Information Centre. (By courtesy of the Ceylon Tea.)

Our day was drawing to a close and our return journey took us past mountainous sandhills onto Yowie Bay, pausing briefly to view historic "Fernleigh" built of sandstone by convict labour about 1820, and further on to Miranda where members spent a few minutes meandering through the "E. G. Waterhouse Camellia Gardens", enjoying what is said to be the best collection of Camellias in Australia, displayed among a natural bushland setting indisposed with various plants to mention only a few - the Australian native Orchid, rocklilies, azaleas, camellias etc.

All too soon our outing came to a close, the patriotic members of the St. George Historical Society very appreciative of their pilgrimage to "Kurnell, Australia's Birthplace."



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GARDEN ISLAND DOCKYARD.

by courtesy H. M. A. Naval Dockyard  
Garden Island.

"A million years ago Garden Island formed part of the plateau we now call the Blue Mountains. In that far age it was situated some thirty miles from the sea. A subsidence in the crust of the earth caused the coastal plain to sink and the sea moved in to form the harbour we now know. The coastal plain became the continental shelf which today lies off the coast. The aboriginal name for the island was Boorooawang.

1788 Governor Arthur Phillip in his first despatch from the colony, mentioned "an island near the cove" which he allocated to H. M. S. Sirius as a garden. This was the first mention of Garden Island in history and was the origin of its name.

The island was used by ships of the navy for this purpose until 1811. In that year Governor Lachlan Macquarie proclaimed it a public domain and forbade its use by the Navy.

By 1856 the Navy had again gained a foothold on the island. Their occupation was of a temporary nature as Cockatoo Island was being considered as a more suitable site for a naval depot.

However, on 5th June, 1866, the island was formally dedicated as a depot for the use of Her Majesty's Ships.

Construction of a rigging house and sail loft was commenced in 1886 and in the following year a boat house, saw mill, engineer's shop and various stores appeared.

In this period the southern hill on the island was removed.

1913. Garden Island was formally taken over by the Royal Australian Navy on 1st July, 1913. During the First World War 852 vessels including 79 warships and 284 transports, hospital ships and minesweepers were serviced by the dockyard.

Development between the two world wars was slow but sufficient for the maintenance and growth of the Australian fleet. Plans for the construction of a graving dock and increased workshop facilities were prepared in this pre-war period.

1939. World War II transformed the dockyard into the most important Naval base in the Southern Hemisphere. In addition to the fitting out and refit of Australian ships, units of the Royal Navy, United States Navy, French and Royal Netherlands Navies were serviced by the Yard.

The first enemy action and the first battle casualties sustained by the dockyard occurred on the evening of 31st May-1st June, 1942. A Japanese midget submarine attack on shipping in the harbour caused the loss of the depot ship Kuttabul lying alongside the island. Fifteen sailors

were killed in this action.

With the fall of Singapore, work on the Captain Cook Graving Dock was accelerated. A land link was forged with the mainland and Garden Island ceased to be a true island.

The Captain Cook Dock was officially opened by H. R. H. Duke of Gloucester on 24th March, 1945.

This dock serviced many ships of the Allied Navies until the end of hostilities.

Postwar development was steady. The addition of an air arm to the R. A. N. and the acquisition of the carriers, Sydney and Melbourne, heralded new techniques and the introduction of new servicing equipments.

Today. New classes of ships, such as the Daring Class Destroyers, Type 12 A. S. Destroyer Escorts, Ton Class Minesweepers, Guided Missile Destroyers (DDG's) and the Oberon Class Submarines, have called for new skills, new facilities, and the applications of new sciences in the servicing of a modern-day navy.

Today, the dockyard covers an area of over sixty acres exclusive of wharves and the graving dock. The replacement value of plant is estimated to be between \$10,000,000 and \$12,000,000. Over 3,000 workmen in fifty trade callings are employed in this giant undertaking.

Garden Island Naval Dockyard has met all challenges and continues to advance, guided by the motto: "We Serve the Fleet."

#### POINTS OF INTEREST

\* Captain Cook Graving Dock - The largest graving dock in the Southern Hemisphere. Length: 1,139ft. Breadth: 147 ft. Depth : 54 ft. Volume Filled: 57,000,000 gallons. Capacity: The largest ship afloat. Time Required to Empty: 5 hours.

\* Dock Caissons. These are the gates of the docks and are in reality vessels, each weighing 5,000 tons. The caissons have tongue-shaped protrusions on both ends and along the bottom which fit into grooves in the dock walls and floor.

\* 250-Ton Crane. The Hammerhead Cantilever Crane is the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. Designed by Sir William Arrolls and constructed by Sydney Steel Ltd. it came into use in March, 1951.

\* Dock Machine Shop. This workshop contains some of the largest machines of their type in the world. The Craven Lathe has a capacity of 100 ft. between centres. A propeller lathe can machine castings up to 16ft. in diameter.

\* Original Shoreline. A Moreton Bay tree growing behind the Dockyard Surgery and almost in line with the entrance to the dock marks

the limit of the original southern shoreline of the island.

\* Barracks Building. The original Naval Barracks on Garden Island. Erected in 1887 to accommodate sailors from the New South Wales Navy. The top floor was the Naval Hospital.

\* Dockyard Church. The Dockyard Church is unique in that it is a consecrated church situated on the first floor of a factory building. The church is all denominations. The interior is a beautiful example of church architecture."

#### A SHORT HISTORY OF H. M. A. DOCKYARD CHURCH, GARDEN ISLAND. SYDNEY.

The late Rev. V. H. Thompson (formerly Chaplain R. A. N.) in his short history of Garden Island writes these words:-

"The Dockyard Church was originally situated in a part of the Joiners' Loft, over the Torpedo Store. When the Establishment grew and this space became too small, the northern end of the Sail Loft was partitioned off to form the present Church, in which there is accommodation for about 400 persons. The date of the occupation of the present Church is a matter of doubt, but I have learned from one informant, who is a pretty reliable authority, that as far as his memory serves him the first Service held in the present Church was a Thanksgiving Service for peace on the termination of the South African War. That would make the date about 1902. The gelatine representations of stained-glass windows were installed in 1904 and 1905 by attendants at the Church, I believe by subscription. One incident connected with the Church - which I trust will give no offence - in which some may see a little humour, I note. Accidentally, among some old papers I came across the record of a wedding that took place there. It was a beautifully executed Order of Service, done in the usual silver type. For the opening hymn, however, the compiler had chosen. ....

'Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us  
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;"

I make no comment."

Much can be said about this unusual Church. Many visitors express surprise that the Church is upstairs. The Church is unique of its kind, and I doubt whether you would find another Church in Australia not on the ground level, yet having an outside entrance. The Dockyard Church in Bermuda however, is identically situated.

The Dockyard Church is full of many memorials and many memories too. The memorial to the late Captain J. W. Bull, R. A. N., may serve to typify some of these. The plaque to the late Captain J. W. N. Bull R. A. N., formerly General Manager, Garden Island, is in good company as the following list of memorials will show:-

1. The Pulpit in memory of Rear Admiral H. J. Feakes is in the form of a Ship's Prow, presented by Mrs. Feakes in 1951.

2. Plaque to Captain F. Dixson, R. N.
3. Mosaic to Vice Admiral Sir William Brooke-Creswell.
4. Mosaic of the "Sydney" ("Emden" action) personnel - depicting one Ship.
5. A very unusual Mosaic of Submarine A.E.I. personnel - depicting one Ship.
6. Special plaque in the form of Memorial Board and Book, commemorating Ships and men lost in World War II and men lost in World War I.
7. A plaque to all men lost 1914-1918 (R. A. N.)
8. A plaque to Vice Admiral John T. C. Glossop.
9. Also to Admiral Charles Napier C. B., and
10. to Rear Admiral I Wm. N. Custance, C. B.
11. Finally a Memorial to the 21 sailors who lost their lives when H. M. A. S. Kuttubul was sunk not more than 200 yards from this Chapel.

There are many beautiful windows of our Church and the memorials which they convey. In memory of Admiral H. G. Bernard, who died 17.2.34, we have Christ depicted walking on the waters and two Naval Ships in lower corners.

"St. George and the Dragon" - presented by citizens of the City of Sydney, commemorating H. M. A. Ship "Sydney" 1913 and 1928.

A composite window in memory of H. M. A. Ships 1914-1918 ("Pioneer", Encounter", Psyche", "Fantome", Protector" and "Una") and a small picture of one Ship presented by the Australian Motor Yacht Squadron of N. S. W.

A window commemorating H. M. A. Ships "Melbourne" 1913 and 1928, erected in the Coronation year of K. G. VI, depicting one Ship, presented by the Royal Motor Yacht Club, N. S. W.

The Brisbane City Council of 1934 have presented a window commemorating H. M. A. S. "Brisbane" - picture of Ship. A window depicting Australian animals - part of Ship's crests, commemorating H. M. Australian Destroyer Flotilla.

Captain Vivian Ward Thompson, R. A. N. Chaplain 1916-1942 is commemorated by the superb window depicting "Christ as the Light of the World".

The Australian Naval Reserve is commemorated by a window depicting Australian Coat of Arms and presented by Officers and Ratings of R. A. N. R. and R. A. N. V. R. in 1932.

H. M. A. Submarine Flotilla is commemorated by a window depicting one Submarine A. E. I. and A. E. II, 1914-18.

The sanctuary is worthy of note also, and an explanation of the unusual symbols painted on the reredos panels is to be found at the West End of the Church.

In more recent years the Chapel from the old Cruiser, H. M. A. S. "Australia" has been placed inside the Dockyard Church, above the Master Attendant's Office. This Chapel is used every week for celebrations of the Holy Communion and for prayers. It is a Chapel within the Dockyard Church, which has a real meaning for all sailors.

1958 brought several changes to this old Church. The old canvas wall separating the Church from the Sail Loft was taken down and renewed with a stronger wall of masonite; a small brass tablet on the wall bears record of this fact.

The gallery in the Church used to be known incorrectly as "the prisoners' gallery". It was so called because for many years, defaulting seamen were marched from the Fire Station-end of the Sail Loft to attend Church; there existed at that time, a staircase from the Sailmakers Loft into this Gallery in the Church. These defaulting Seamen were under the jurisdiction of the Master-at-Arms, and they sat in this "prisoners' gallery", with a Leading-Patrolman by their side to prevent their escape.

Furthermore, there was a wire netting placed around the "prison Gallery" to prevent any defaulter from throwing his book at the Admiral, who sat just below the Altar end of the gallery. In July, 1958, this gallery was closed off from the Sailmakers Loft and a firm wooden staircase to the gallery was placed in the Church; and the old so-called "prisoner seats" were removed.

In November, 1958, the Dean of Sydney, the Very Rev. E. A. Pitt, M. A., dedicated our new Church doors which replaced the original "sliding doors". These doors were modelled on certain Church doors to be found at St. John's Church, Darlinghurst.

The most recent addition has been the Queen's Colour incorporating the White Ensign which was used in the Australian Fleet. This has now been laid up in the Garden Island Dockyard Church.

At the entrance to the Church is a Ship's bell from the sailing ship Sobron. Sobron after seeing service with the N. S. W. Government was taken over by the R. A. N. in 1911.

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THE AFFAIRS OF ROSE VALE VILLA, ROCKDALE

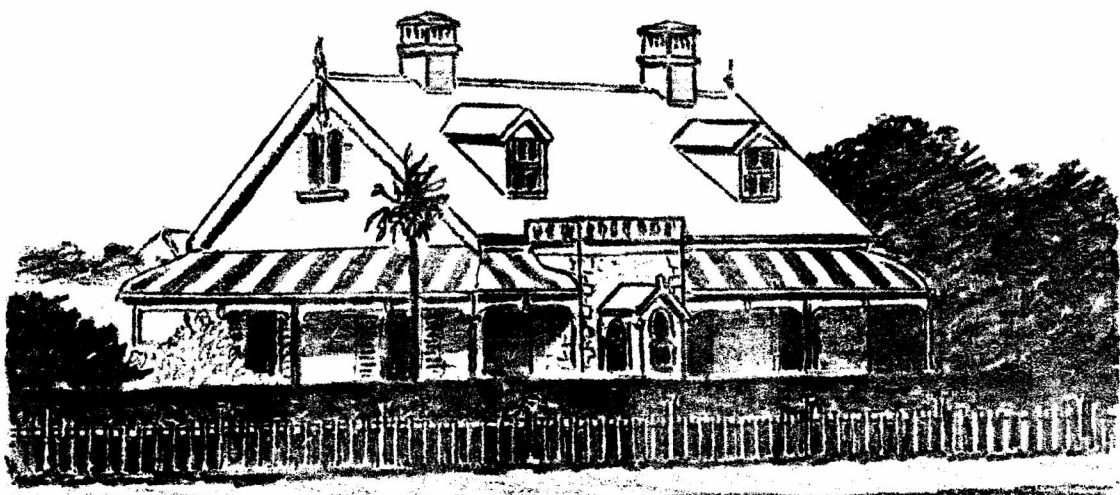
Written & Illustrated by

Gifford and Eileen Eardley.



*Wm. H. Burdette.*  
 THE COTTAGE OF JAMES MORSE, ROCKDALE.

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*Wm. H. Burdette.*

"ROSE VALE VILLA." ROCKDALE.



## THE AFFAIRS OF ROSE VALE VILLA, ROCKDALE.

Gifford and Eileen Eardley.

William John Iliffe was born in London in the year 1842 and came to Sydney as a young lad in 1852, where he followed various pursuits in the nature of employment. It is evident that he had a natural bent for plant cultivation for he took up an area of ten acres of land at West Botany, a one-time bush hamlet now known as Rockdale. Here, against the border of Rocky Point Road, he established the Rose Vale Nursery, and more or less concentrated his efforts on the growth of numerous varieties of roses. At one time, so it has been related, he had more than eighty-thousand plants, each growing in separate earthenware pots, to supply the demands of the gardeners of Sydney Town.

Unfortunately there does not appear to be any record or illustration of the design of the original Iliffe homestead at Rockdale, however, William Iliffe succeeded in his business and eventually married Sarah Morse, who lived in a small double-fronted cottage almost opposite the nursery property. In 1873 the splendid stone residence, aptly known as Rose Vale Villa, was erected, the walls being constructed of exquisitely wrought sandstone, insofar as the facade was concerned, taken from the quarry which then existed at the eastern end of Bestic Street where it then terminated at the north-western slopes of Rockdale Hill.

Rose Vale Villa was a commodious one and a half storied residence which contained, on the ground floor, a large Drawing Room, a Dining Room, an Entrance Hall and two Bedrooms. Upstairs there were four Bedrooms contained within the slated roof slopes, each served by attractive dormers, two at the front of the roof and two at the back, whilst end windows, with stone mullions, admitted light from the end gables. The deep overhanging barge-boards of the gables were excellently cut into pierced pattern-work. The two stone chimneys were gems of their kind and followed an Italian design, the top of each being enclosed with a rectangular shaped cut stone slab. The smoke apertures were placed immediately beneath the coping slab and, arranged in groups of three, were shaped like round-topped pigeon holes. There were separate verandahs at ground floor level, one at the front, and another at the northern side, each being provided with cast-iron supporting posts and a delicate cast-iron fringe, which was of the type now known as Sydney Lace. Each verandah was entered from path level by gracefully curved hand-cut steps. Full length French windows, complete with double folding shutters, were provided to the main rooms. The Drawing Room projected from the facade to the front level of the verandah and contained an excellently wrought three-sided oriel window, the flat roof of the extension being surrounded on three sides by a stone-topped balustrade, supported at short intervals by stubby turned stone pillars. A really beautiful entablature adorning a residence which may be regarded as one of the finest of the stone cottages erected in the St. George District.

The kitchen and scullery, together with a breakfast-room, were formed by an eastern extension at the rear of the main building, access being given by a side verandah. This arrangement was common to houses of the period, as it served to keep cooking odours from the bedrooms and living rooms, and also had the merit of giving, to a certain extent, safety against fire, when wood was so universally used in fuel stoves and clothes boiling "coppers". The scullery, apart from its general purpose for washing clothes



and dishes etc., also came into use for "washing up" humans on the occasion of the normal weekly tub. The everyday business of hand and face washing was generally relegated to the sanctity of the bedroom wash-stand, where the marble top supported a large water basin and a jug of ornate floral pattern inlaid in its voluptuous curves, together with a china soap-stand, ring-stands, and similar bric-a-brac.

East of the kitchen was a large packing shed, built of timber scantlings, its sides and roof covered with corrugated iron, purely functional without any architectural merit. There were some eight or nine heated glass-houses which gained winter warmth from a coal heated boiler per medium of circulating hot-water pipes. Each hot-house possessed a small water trough, replete with gold-fish, to provide the necessary humidity for the plant growth.

Double white-painted gates provided entrance of vehicles to the property from the Rocky Point Road, the entrance being flanked by a huge "monkey-nut" tree (perhaps a Scotch Fir) which provided edible items of great interest to the local children. These nuts were often taken by the girls of the family to the Zoological Gardens, then at Moore Park in Sydney, where the monkeys, although interested in the offering, and appreciated the gesture, found that they had no hammer to crack them open and they were too hard for the teeth.

Some fifty feet away from the entrance gate, on the northern side of the drive, were the stables, cart-houses, harness-room, feed-loft, and beneath the same roof at its southern end were two small rooms dedicated to the use of John Ah Hee, a delightful kindly-natured and tiny Chinese gentleman with an enchanting surname, of whom more anon. The stable building housed the four-wheeled flat-topped horse-drawn lorry, which, under the care of the nursery overseer, Lambert Laurence, made the daily round of the Sydney florist shops, such as Searles and Birminghams in Oxford Street. John Miffe had two horses for this work, using one at a time in the lorry. There was a fine white coated animal named "Victor" and a more demure lass, of brown colouration, who answered to the name of "Dolly". The horse paddock ranged northwards along the frontage of Rocky Point Road to the intersection of Bestic Street, and covered about an acre of grazing land. Leaving the stables the drive curved round to the south in order to reach the confines of the packing shed where the lorry wagon was loaded with orders gained for the daily round. In addition to the glass-house equipment there was a large edifice given over to the propagation of ferns.

Quantities of the seeds of the Kentia Palm were specially imported from Lord Howe Island, and, under the care of John Ah Hee, were individually planted in separate earthenware pots, and, when about a foot or so in height, found a ready market for the decoration of drawing rooms of both cottages and more pretentious houses of suburban Sydney. Another speciality was the importation from Japan of Haresfoot Fern, the roots of which were fashioned, or rather entwined, to represent monkey and other animal shapes, houses, boats, and kindred subjects, they were even to be purchased wrapped around coconuts fitted with a short length of cord for

suspension purposes. On arrival these seemingly hairy roots were first soaked in water and then hung in the green-house until they sprouted, and when covered with a mass of tiny fern shoots, were ready for distribution per medium of the florist's shops. These pretty novelties were in great demand by people fortunate and interested enough to maintain a bush house.

The trickling creek, known as Bray's Drain, flowed through the Iliffe property, about midway in its depth, its banks being covered with tuber-roses and overtopped by rhododendrons. Between the horse paddock and the creek was a large area devoted to rose growing, these plants also extending to the eastern boundary fence. Opposite the drive, on the eastern side of the creek, was the Bulb Garden, given over to narcissus of various sorts, daffodils, and such like botanical treasures. East of this floral paradise was the cow-paddock where two cows dined in comfort amidst a surround of the local bushland. South of the bulb garden, and also on the eastern side of the creek, was a flower garden, usually riotous with colour, then an acre of feathery-plumed pampasgrass, and then another acre devoted to camelia trees.

All in all Rose Vale Villa was the show place of Rockdale, with its flower dotted lawns, kept in immaculate condition by Ah Hee, and its hydrangia and azalea bordered walks. People came from everywhere to purchase flowers at three pence per bunch, to inspect its green-houses and its hot-houses, coming away with all manner of beautiful plant gems which the green fingers of William John Iliffe and John Ah Hee had so lovingly raised.

As before stated this latter Celestial gentleman lived within the stable, at his own desire, and his only recreation appeared to be his Saturday night jaunt to visit his compatriots living mostly in the Haymarket area of Sydney town. Otherwise he chose to dine in solitary state, in his own domicile, on the numerous rice dishes that he concocted, intermixed with pieces of pork and duck, the latter having the appearance, as far as the skin was concerned, of having undergone the rigours of French polishing. John Ah Hee used chop sticks for eating and never, under any circumstances, did he dine with company. It is interesting to note that his little teapot, together with his chop-sticks, are still cherished, as mementos of a kindly gentleman, by members of the family.

One of John Ah Hee's few pleasures was to sit beside the driver of a horse-drawn hearse at funerals associated with the Iliffe family or immediate friends of that family. On one occasion when John Ah Hee was absent in town, the stable rats decided to have a feed of wax-matches, the resulting conflagration, although surprising to the rodents no doubt, burnt down the stables and the two roomed domicile. John Ah Hee was found temporary accommodation with his countrymen until such time as the stable structure was rebuilt and his domicile re-established. John Ah Hee was said to be well over ninety years of age, and completely blind, when he passed away. According to Chinese custom he was temporarily buried at Rookwood Cemetery, and after a passage of ten years or so, his remains were disinterred and sent back to his ancestral grave in China. It should be mentioned that William John Iliffe held a very high opinion of the character

and merits of John Ah Hee, and made provision in his will "that he should be retained and kept in comfort to the end of his days".

At one period a florist shop was established in the Sydney Arcade for the sale of seedlings, palms, ferns, and floral products of the Rose Vale Nursery. This shop was later taken over by two maiden ladies, the Misses Balcom and Baptist. Another venture was the purchase, and development, as a nursery of some forty acres of land at the head of Stoney Creek, located at the corner of Stoney Creek Road and Croydon Road, extending along the latter thoroughfare to its junction with the Forest Road, the house being erected near this latter junction. This land was subdivided by Messrs. Peach Brothers about 1917, the housing allotments being served by streets named after members of the Iliffe family, such as Ada Street, Hancock Street, Rose Street, and Iliffe Street. The beautiful expanse of the Bexley Golf Links and the adjacent Kingsgrove Park were also included, at one time, in the estate.

There were five children in the Iliffe family who, in turn, were named Emily, Harriet, Annie, William, and Ada. After the death of William John Iliffe the eldest girl (married to Mr. Hancock) carried on the business at Rose Vale Villa. Harriet married Thomas Smith and resided in a cottage fronting Bestic Street at the north-eastern corner of the Rose Vale property. Annie passed away at the early age of nineteen years, whilst William died in babyhood. The youngest girl, Ada, married Frederick Mumford.

After the closure of the Rose Vale Nursery the family opened a florist's shop on the original property, with its frontage to Princes Highway. About this period, although the major part of its land had been subdivided, Rose Vale Villa came into use for wedding receptions and similar small public gatherings, for which its tree clad surround and interior beauty were well suited. The former nursery gardens, at their subdivision, were served by extensions northward of York and George Streets.

About 1962 the Rockdale Municipal Council became interested in the purchase of the Rose Vale Villa for the establishment of a regional folk museum. However, the purchase price of £27,500 was beyond the council's resources for this particular cultural venture and the matter lapsed. The house was later demolished but fortunately the stones of the beautiful facade were given to the council for inclusion in some structure which, someday, we hope, will again show their beauty to the best advantage. The site of the old home is now occupied by the Rose Vale Garage, constructed after the manner of its kind, but conveys no semblance of the erstwhile beauty of the famous house once known so far and wide as "Rose Vale Villa".

The authors are indebted to Mrs. Cottrell, and her sister Mrs. S. A. Messer, and also to Mr. Clive Smith, the florist of the Tramway Arcade at Rockdale, descendants of the Iliffe family, who have kindly supplied much of the information utilized in the preparation of the above essay.

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