IN MEMORIAM: C. W. GARDINER-GARDEN

To many of our members of more recent joining, the name of Jock Garden, as he was affectionately called, might mean little. A stalwart of the early years of our Society, he has been unseen during the last decade or more. But that was not Jock’s fault; a long and distressing incapacitation overtook him, and one of the most irksome hardships he had to endure must have been the frustration of his energies and talents during his illness. If his energies had been released, the Society would have been even more enriched.

Now that Clarence Wilfred Gardiner-Garden has passed on, we can look back with gratitude upon all that he has done for us. It is no disservice to our founders to say that although the Society never lacked enthusiasm for our local history, for some years it perhaps lacked direction and driving force. The reasons are immaterial, though it is probably enough to say that there was a war on. Soon, however, that drive and direction manifested itself, and foremost among the workers and doers were that indefatigable pair, the late Alec Fleming and Jock Garden. Having no premises to call its own, the Society’s growing records were stored in a Crown Street backoffice room, and there, one night every week, the Bustle Farm Boys, as they dubbed themselves, forgathered. They enjoyed themselves, of course, laughing and joking, but at the same time they worked hard, collating the growing picture and documentary collection, identifying, cataloguing, labelling. Their work was invaluable in its wide generality.

Then we came to discover that Jock was following an independent line of his own research: Cook, the early explorers, and our early industrial history, culminating in some lectures which were subsequently expanded and published. That was many years ago; yet more recent members can follow the story from there, for Jock’s “Observations” and “Port of Wollongong” remain as standard publications. Our Society has a foremost place among regional societies for its long list of publications, and Jock was perhaps the leading pioneer in that field. Certainly Alec Fleming would have been the first to say so.

Jock Garden will not be forgotten; the very continuity of sales will constantly recall this good and amiable fellow, this devoted servant of our Society for as long as he was spared to work for it.

—E.B.